kRishhNAmRita-mahArNava

Compiled by Shrisha Rao on Dvait List

|| shrI gurubhyo namaH hariH OM ||

|| atha shrI kR^ishhNAmR^ita-mahArNavam.h ||

##

architaH saMsmR^ito dhyAtaH kIrtitaH kathitaH shrutaH |
yo dadAtyamR^itatvaM hi sa mAM raxatu keshavaH || 1 ||

##

By archanA, smaraNa, dhyAna, kIrtana, kathana, and shravaNa,
in respect of whom, one gets mukti, may that Keshava protect me.

The first verse sets out the scope of the entire text, and informs one that Krishna is to be worshipped in various means, by doing which one will be freed from death. This however leaves open the question of whether it might not be more feasible to seek out some interim, more easily achieved goal. The next verse answers this by saying:

##

tApatrayeNa santaptaM yadetadakhilaM jagat.h |
vaxyAmi shAntaye hyasya kR^ishhNAmR^ita mahArNavam.h || 2 ||

##

The entire world is afflicted by various kinds of sorrow (which cannot be remedied in any other fashion); to quench the same, I now state the kR^ishhNAmR^ita-mahArNava.

It is clarified that there is no comprehensive solution to the suffering that afflicts all embodied beings, and as such, even from a short-term perspective, the worship of Krishna is certainly without an alternative.

Even so, one might wonder if such worship is only a sign of weakness and impotence,

which a stronger person could do well to avoid; this doubt is answered by saying:

##

te narAH pashavo loke kiM teshhAM jIvane phalam.h |

yairna labdhA harerdIxA nArchito vA janArdanam.h || 3 ||

##

- They are animals in human form; what is the use of their living? who have not obtained the dIxA of Hari, nor worshipped Janardana.

This tells us that it is inappropriate for one to imagine that lack of

worship of Sri Hari could be considered a sign of strength or ability, and states clearly that a life bereft of His worship could not possibly be considered a life well-lived, at all, no matter what other attainments there might be in it.

After reading the previous verse, a doubt may still remain: it is not

sufficient to merely brand anyone who does not worship Krishna as a moron, and proceed on that basis. There has to be some cogent reason for arguing that such worship is the only possible reason for life's fulfillment. The next verse answers this by saying:

##

saMsAre.asmin.h mahAghore janmarogabhayAkule |

ayameko mahAbhAgaH pUjyate yadadhoxajaH || 4 ||

##

In this world which is very fearsome, due to birth, disease, fear, etc.,

only the one who worships Adhokshaja can be considered fortunate.

By this, one is reminded that no matter what attainments one may speak of,

one still is subject to the many travails that flesh is heir to, and on

the balance, the joy due to any attainments is very small compared to the

continuous suffering that embodied existence implies, and any such joy is also bounded in time by death. As such, any worthwhile lifetime must attend to these shortcomings as well, in order to be considered worthwhile.

At this, one may wonder why it should be granted that worship of Krishna is superior; even if other activities do not remove suffering, perhaps even this does not count as an improvement over them? The next verse answers this by saying:

##

sa nAma sukR^itI loke kulaM tenAbhyalaN^kR^itam.h |

AdhAraH sarvabhUtAnAM yena vishhNuH prasAditaH || 5 ||

##

By that kind of deed, the world benefits (in addition to the individual concerned), and even the clan is given a good name; by one who obtains the grace of the Vishnu who is the support of all creatures.

By this, it is stated that the worship of Vishnu is unlike other

activities which fail to remove misery; such worship not only helps the individual, but is also of collective benefit to the world at large, and even gives the family or community a good name. Thus, it certainly stands

out from other kinds of activities that one could engage in. By knowing and worshipping Vishnu as the support of all creatures, one develops genuine compassion towards all creatures, and freedom from fear as well (inasmuch as there is no cause to fear anything that is controlled by one's beloved Deity).

At the conclusion of the previous verse, a doubt is apt to arise: there are other kinds of religious actions which can bring the same results of helping the individual and the world as a whole. So why not carry out any such in preference to worship of Krishna? After all, there are lots of people, even well-minded ones, who think that mere worship is a waste of time, and that one must instead focus on social work, etc. The next verse answers this as follows:

##

yaj~nAnAM tapasAM chaiva shubhAnAM chaiva karmaNAm.h |
tadvishishhTaphalaM nR^INAM sadaivArAdhanaM hareH || 6 ||

##

Sacrifices, austerities, and also virtuous rites or actions, cannot give superior results, and hence such should always be carried out as worship of Hari.

The idea conveyed is that any other kind of virtuous activity cannot, under any circumstances, yield superior results to that obtained by worship of Sri Hari, and that furthermore, such cannot yield **any** of

the results they are known for independently , without His will. As such, there need be no doubt about the worship of Krishna on this account. All such actions should only be done as His worship, and for no other reason.

At that, one is apt to have a doubt: times are not suitable for one to speak of performing great acts of virtue or worship; there are many obstacles to such, owing in major part to the effects of Kali-Yuga which imperil all seekers, etc. Worship and the like require circumstances which cannot be had in this day and age, and any attempts one makes at the same will doubtless be faulty in spite of one's best efforts. As such, where is the question of one's worshipping Krishna, much less of performing other (difficult) virtuous actions as His worship? The next two verses answer this as follows:

##

kalau kalimaladhvaMsi sarvapApaharaM harim.h |
ye.archayanti narA nityaM te.api vandyA yathA hariH || 7 ||

nAsti shreyaskaraM nR^INAM vishhNorArAdhanAnmuneH |
yuge.asminstAmase loke satataM pUjyate nR^ibhiH || 8 ||

##

In Kali-Yuga, Hari is the destroyer of the filth of Kali, and the remover of all sins; [therefore] the humans who worship Hari

every day also become worshippable, as per their ability.

The saints know that there is nothing superior to Vishnu’s worship; as such, in this Yuga, and in the evil world, the best among men worship Him constantly.

It is clarified that the presence of obstacles placed by Kali, etc., should be a motivator for one to worship Sri Hari as the remover of the same, rather than forming a barrier in one’s mind. As He is the remover of such filth within and without oneself, knowing Him as such and worshipping Him are appropriate remedies to the problem. By dedicating all actions to Him and knowing Him as the remover of all sin, one does not have to fear the incurring of sin on account of imperfection of action. By gradually getting rid of the obstacles of Kali within and without, a person becomes virtuous by His grace, and even an example to others. For these reasons, notwithstanding the apparent difficulties, those of sound judgement, the creme-de-la-creme of humanity, know that there is nothing superior to Vishnu’s worship, which they thus engage in constantly.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, a doubt is apt to arise: it is possible for one to worship many different deities, many of whom may actually grant one cherished desires, and give other benefits similar to those already stated. In that respect, how is the worship of Krishna special in any way? To answer this, the next verse states:

##

archite devadeveshe shaN^khachakragadAdhare |

architAH sarvadevAH syuryataH sarvagato hariH || 9 ||

##

If the Deity of deities, bearing shankha, chakra, and gadA alone is worshipped, all deities are worshipped thereby, as Hari is present everywhere.

It is clarified that the worship of Krishna alone is at least as fruitful as the worship of all deities, since He is present in all, and by worshipping Him as present in all, one worships all that is to be worshipped. At this, one is apt to have the doubt that His being present everywhere is no guarantee of superiority, or fitness for worship. It in fact could be construed that it is just the opposite; that anything present everywhere is inert, commonplace and of no special note. This doubt is dealt with as follows:

##

svarchite sarvalokeshe surAsuranamskR^ite |
keshave kaMsakeshighne na yAti narakaM naraH || 10 ||

##

Upon worshipping the Lord of all worlds, who is worshipped by all the gods and demons, the Keshava who killed Kamsa and Keshi, a human does not go to ***.

It is clarified that rather than being commonplace, Krishna is extremely special; that He is not merely present in all the worlds, but is their Ruler as well, and is worshipped by all their Denizens according to their capacities. By knowing Him as being a Sentient and active entity rather than an inert and attributeless one, a human does not suffer ***. At this, one is apt to have the doubt that such a tremendous entity, who pervades the entire universe and is worshipped by all, is well beyond the pale of one's modest understanding and competence, and as such, one may not be able to carry out His worship due to one's incompetence and other limitations. To remove this doubt, it is said in the next verse:

##

sakR^idabhyarchya govindaM bilvapatreNa mAnavaH |
muktibhAgI nirAtaN^kI vishhNuloke chiraM vaset.h || 11 ||

##

If a human worships Govinda even once with devotion with just bilva-leaves; then s/he ultimately obtains the fortune of liberation, and is freed from terror, and resides in Vishnu's world forever.

By using 'manavaH', it is clarified that while the worship of Krishna is carried out by much greater entities as well, even humans can worship Him fruitfully, and lack of material resources to apply in His

worship is no barrier as it is devotion, rather than such, which matters (cf. Bhagavad Gita IX-26). Even such limited worship is capable of giving one the ultimate benefit, and therefore, there is no cause to reject worship on account of one's limitation. At this, one may still have the doubt that profundity of devotion is extremely difficult to obtain, as such generally goes hand-in-hand with scholarship and depth of knowledge—given one's lack of devotion, what is said here cannot apply to oneself. To answer that, it is said:

##

sakR^idabhyarchito yena helayA.api namaskR^itaH |
sa yAti paramaM sthAnaM yatsurairapi durlabham.h || 12 ||

##

If He is worshipped by someone even as a matter of jest;
then that person obtains that supreme position, which cannot be
had even by deities.

As such, even if one thinks that one's worship is really a joke given

one's lack of understanding and devotion, one still must apply oneself just the same, secure in the knowledge that such worship will still yield such benefit as cannot be had even from rigorous worship of any other deity, who cannot obtain such a position independently.

Having stated the basics of Vishnu’s worship, Srimad Acharya now

proceeds to quote various authorities for the same (many of these have been traced, but the references as such are not known to me; only the names of the speakers in the original instance are given).

##

(nAradaH)

samastalokanAthasya devadevasya shArN^gaNaH |
sAxAdbhagavato vishhNoH pUjanaM janmanaH phalam.h || 13 ||

##

He, who is the Lord of the entire universe, is the Deity of all deities, and is all-knowing; the worship of that Vishnu, who is verily the Supreme Being, is the consummation of one’s life.

How should such worship be conducted, and why is it the consummation of one’s life? The next quote answers:

##

(pulahaH)

bhaktyA durvAN^kuraiH puMbhiH pUjitaH purushhottamaH |
harirdadAti hi phalaM sarvayaj~naishcha durlabham.h || 14 ||

##

If one worships the Purushottama with devotion using even blades of durva, Hari gives such a result, as cannot be obtained even by all yaj~na-s.

Such worship should be carried out with devotion rather than for show, etc., and it gives results exceeding those obtained by yaj~na-s, which is why it is of such worth. Perhaps such worship is rather difficult, or the results thereof rarely seen, nonetheless? No, says the next quote:

##

vidhinA devadeveshaH shaN^khachakradharo hariH |
phalaM dadAti sulabhaM salilenApi pUjitaH || 15 ||

##

Upon worship in the approved fashion even with water, the

Hari who bears shankha and chakra gives results easily.

All good, but what if one is satisfied already, and doesn’t wish for

anything more? In that case surely worship may be avoided? The next quote indicates otherwise:

##

narake pachyamAnastu yamena paribhAshhitaH |
kiM tvayA nArchito devaH keshavaH kleshanAshanaH || 16 ||

##

This was said by Yama in a certain instance, to someone suffering the ordeal of ***: “Why was Keshava, the remover of all suffering, not worshipped by you?”

The idea is that even if one is happy in one’s present situation, the karma-burden that one carries will doubtless necessitate one’s suffering in future, in this life or in the afterlife, and at least for that reason, worship of Krishna is unavoidable.

At the conclusion of the last quote from Yama, one is apt to think

that perhaps the poor sufferer did not worship for not having had the facilities, and hence a rebuke is not justified. Not so—

##

(yamaH)

nArasiMho hR^ishhIkeshaH puNDarIkanibhexaNaH |
smaraNAnmuktido nR^INAM sa tvayA kiM na pUjitaH || 17 ||

##

That Narasimha, Hrshikesha, Pundarikaksha, who gives mukti merely for remembering [him] -- why was He not worshipped by you??

As such, it has to be that the lack of worship even in one's own mind is a matter of choice, rather than a constraint forced on one by lack of resources or the like. However, should one then merely be content to occasionally bring Krishna into one's mind, but forget about all the physical kinds of worship, in order to conserve limited resources or time? Not at all—

##

dravyANAmapyabhAve tu salilenApi pUjitaH |

yo dadAti svakaM sthAnaM sa tvayA kiM na pUjitaH || 18 ||

##

If there is lack of resources, then He can be worshipped even using water; to such a one He gives [the joy of] one's own position—why was He not worshipped by you?

Therefore, while He may be worshipped in one's own mind, it is

improper to imagine that one may do away with actual physical worship and service even when one is able to offer some.

Yama summarizes his views, by stating the lot of those who do not heed his advice:

##

garbhasthitA mR^itA vA.api mushhitAste sudoshhitaH |
na prAptA yairharerdIxA sarvaduHkhavimochinI || 19 ||

##

Verily, worse is the lot of one who has not obtained the dIxA of

Hari which destroys all suffering, than even that of one who suffers presence in the womb, or even the pangs of death.

This is so because even such suffering may be considered bounded in time, while there is no end to suffering for one who does not worship

Krishna. In other words, birth and death are self-limiting, in that

the pain of birth does not cause any more pain than due to one birth, etc.; however, lack of worship of Krishna can give the pain of countless births and deaths.

Even after all the previous, it is still possible for one to have a

doubt that any results obtained by worshipping Krishna may yet come very late, even if they be superior ones. What would be the point of going through a lot of suffering or anticipation first, before coming to a good end? Inasmuch as celerity may be considered a virtue, it is uncertain that worshipping Krishna is worthwhile. For that, it is said:

##

(mArkaNDeyaH)

sakR^idabhyarchito yena devedevo janArdanaH |
yatkR^itaM tatkR^itaM tena saMprAptaM paramaM padam.h || 20 ||

##

The devoted worship of Janardana, the Deity of deities, is done by

whom, he is given by You the supreme position immediately.

That is to say, there need be no doubt that there is anything but one's own lack of desire to worship Krishna, that stops one from achieving the result that He gives immediately. Even so, one may think that working towards otherworldly liberation is rather esoteric or egg-headed, even if all of the previous be true. It is surely as well to keep an active interest in the present world and pursue worthwhile objectives of dharma, etc., in it. For that, it is said:

##

dharmArthakAmamoxANAM nAnyopAyastu vidyate |
satyaM bravImi devesha hR^ishIkeshArchanAdR^ite || 21 ||

##

In respect of dharma, artha, kAma, and moxa, there is no other solution; this I state truthfully, O king of deities (Indra), other than the worship of Hrshikesha.

The various objectives that one could aim at would be dharma (virtuous actions), artha (gain of wealth), kAma (gain of happiness/sensory satisfaction), and moxa (liberation), and it is stated that there

verily is no way to obtain any of these, unless Krishna wills one to have it, and hence, too, his worship is not avoided. At this, one may wonder: surely others besides Krishna may be worshippable or illustrious as well—it would surely be folly to imagine that one can disregard all worthwhile humans and yet worship Krishna only. So who are the people worthy of one's regard? This query is answered as follows:

##

tasya yaj~navarAhasya vishhNoramitatejasaH |
praNAmaM ye cha kurvanti teshhAmapi namo namaH || 22 ||

##

Him, the 'yaj~na' and the 'varAha', the Vishnu of limitless brilliance; whoever salutes Him and [His devotees], I worship them too, over and over.

In the IshAvAsya-bhAshhya-TIka, Sri Jayatiirtha states that Lord Vishnu is known by the epithet 'yaj~na' for being the recipient of all sacrifices and virtuous actions: 'sarvayaj~naboktR^itvAt.h yaj~nanAma ityarthaH'. The 'varAha' epithet conveys the idea that one is to know Him as being the Support of the world as well. Therefore, anyone who correctly understands the Lord as being of untold brilliance, the Support of the world, and also the object of all sacrifices, and worships Him as such, such a one is worthy of one's regard as well.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one could still have a doubt

whether it might be possible for someone other than one worshipping Krishna in the stated manner, to obtain some position of greatness or merit, and thus be worthy of one's own regard as well. After all, in the world, people do idolize persons of significant achievement in a variety of fields, and there is nothing to suggest that this is itself incorrect. The next quote shows otherwise:

##

(marIchiH)

anArAdhitagovindairnaraiH sthAnaM nR^ipAtmaja |
na hi samprApyate shreshhThaM tasmAdArAdhayAchyutam.h || 23 ||

(shrI vishhNu-purANa, adhyAya 11)

##

O king: a human, having failed to worship Govinda;
verily fails to obtain the worthy—hence, worship the One who is free of all flaws.

The idea conveyed is that without having the Flawless One in one's mind and worshipping Him, it is not possible for one to lose one's own flaws.

Just as parents point out to their children people they consider role

models for the latter to adopt, the wise sage advises one to accept Krishna as one's role model, for surely it would be impossible for one to lose one's flaws by keeping role models who are themselves flawed, or by not having any role models at all. At this, one may have the doubt that this advice for character-building, while perhaps well-intentioned, has nothing to do with the general trend of the present work, and hence is irrelevant. To answer that, the next quote says:

##

(atriH)

paraH parANAM purushhastushhTo yasya janArdanaH |
sa chApnotyaxayaM sthAnaM etatsatyaM mayoditam.h || 24 ||

(shrI vishhNu-purANa, adhyAya 11)

By whom is satisfied Janardana, who is Superior to the superior; even he obtains that ceaseless abode, thus the Truth has been stated by me.

It is stated that even by knowing Krishna as being Superior to Lakshmi, etc., who is superior to all jIva-s starting from Brahma for not having a perishable body (cf. Bhagavad Gita XV-16 et. seq.), and satisfying Him by worshipping Him as a role model, one obtains the Supreme Abode—thus, verily, is the Truth.

The teaching of the above two verses is summarized as follows:

##

(aN^girAH)

yasyAntaH sarvamevedamachyutasyAvyayAtmanaH |
tamArAdhaya govindaM sthAnamugraM yadIchchhasi || 25 ||

(shrI vishhNu-purANa, adhyAya 11)

##

By whom is grasped the end of all this, that Flawless One, and the changeless Atman; that Govinda you should worship, if you desire the Supreme Abode.

In other words, all that exists other than Krishna is unable to hold its own against Him, and is seen by Him to be limited in scope, as He can see its end, after a fashion. As such, only He, who is without flaw and is Himself changeless, is to be worshipped by those desiring to remove the flaws which bring them misery, and desiring to obtain the Supreme Abode where there is no distress (which invariably comes due to change).

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to wonder by what

manner of method one could possibly know Krishna to be, as stated, for one cannot readily think of any way in which He could exceed everything known to oneself. To answer this, it is said:

##

(pulastyaH)

paraM brahma paraM dhAma yo.asau brahma sanAtanaH |
tamArAdhya hariM yAti muktimapyatha durlabham.h || 26 ||

(shrI vishhNu-purANa, adhyAya 11)

##

The Supreme, of complete attributes, who is the foremost recourse,
and of eternal nature; having worshipped that Hari, one obtains
the mukti that is most difficult to get.

It is stated that one must always know Krishna to be a ‘paripUrNa’, and as the Supreme Brahman, not as an attributeless one who appears to have attributes and is merely a way-station until one develops the competence to focus on the attributeless ideal. It is further stated that Sri Hari is not known by anyone as He precedes all of them, so to speak, for being Eternal (hence He knows a bound for all, just as a parent knows a child to be bounded, for having witnessed his or her birth). Having known Him in this fashion and worshipped Him accordingly, one attains mukti which cannot be had in other ways.

Even so, one may have a doubt on account of the fact that worship of

Krishna is very uncommon in the world—if people have achieved

liberation in this fashion, that is not known to oneself as one has no experience of the liberated. As such, there are no examples to show that such advice as given here has been fruitfully taken by any worthy individual, which needs must cast a doubt upon its worth. To answer this, it is said:

##

(pulahaH)

indramindraH paraM sthAnaM yamArAdhya jagatpatim.h |
prApa yaj~napatiM vishhNuM tamArAdhaya suvrata || 27 ||

(shrI vishhNu-purANa, adhyAya 11)

##

By worshipping whom, Indra obtained the coveted position of Indra, worship that Vishnu, the Lord of yaj~na-s, O one of pious observance.

It is stated that even the deities including Indra obtain their status

only at His pleasure, and as such, there is no cause for one to hold that
there are no examples that demonstrate the efficacy of Vishnu's worship.

It is also stated that even when Vedic rituals exist which purportedly

give certain benefits, such should only be carried out as actions in His worship—for only He can give one the benefits claimed—and only then are the rituals meaningful.

That's all well, one may think, but what if one desires worldly objects or positions of authority? Indra is after all a rather unearthly position which one has no tangible experience of. To answer this, it is stated:

##

prApnotyArAdhite vishhNau manasA yadyadichchhati |
trailokyAntargataM sthAnaM kimu lokottarottaram.h || 28 ||

##

The worshipper of Vishnu obtains whatever (s)he wishes for;
whether it be within or without the three worlds [for nothing
is too big or small for Him].

As such, there is no reason to say that only unseen or otherworldly

benefits are claimed in respect of Krishna's worship, and that there can be no tangible benefit. So does this mean that one can or should worship Him only whenever one needs specific ends? It is indicated otherwise:

##

ye.archayanti sadA vishhNuM shaN^khachakragadAdharam.h |
sarvapApavinirmuktAH paraM brahma vishanti te || 29 ||

##

Those who worship Vishnu, the bearer of the shankha, chakra, and gadA, constantly, are completely freed from all sins, and enter into the Supreme Brahman.

As such, it is indicated that even though Vishnu may be worshipped

intemittently, and can also give partial benefits, it is best that He be worshipped continually, which gives one the supreme benefit of freedom from suffering, and presence in the Supreme Himself.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may get the doubt that the description therein is of the individual's merging with the nondual, attributeless Brahman, and it would be inappropriate to read it as anything but that. Such merger is derived only by knowledge of identity with Vishnu and the illusoriness of one's bondage. As such, where is the

question of upholding difference and attributing so many qualities to Him, which are really illusory and only meant to guide the incompetent towards the understanding of the formless absolute? To answer that question, the next verse says:

##

tato.aniruddhaM deveshaM pradyumnaM cha tataH param.h |
tataH saN^karshhaNaM devaM vAsudevaM parAtparam.h || 30 ||

##

Thereupon [the mukta enters] Aniruddha, the Supreme Deity, and Pradyumna thereafter; thereafter Sankarshana, and finally Vasudeva, who is Superior to the superior.

It is stated that the entrance of the individual into Brahman is not a

dissolution of his/her identity into the formless absolute, but rather a stepwise process by which different aspects of the Supreme are gained successively. As such, there is no cause to hold that the soul's merger with an attributeless ideal is intended when describing mukti.

At this, one may wonder: what happens to the mukta after "entering" Vasudeva? Does (s)he enter anothe form, or perhaps an even superior being? Or does there there occur a chain or loop where these four steps are executed indefinitely? Does the mukta ever return to ordinary worldly existence ever after? To answer these, it is stated in the next verse:

##

vAsudevAtparaM nAstIti vedAntanishchayaH |
vAsudevaM pravishhTAnAM punarAvartanaM kutaH || 31 ||

##

That there is nothing superior to Vasudeva, is the decided purport of all Vedanta; [thus] how can there be a return for one who has entered Vasudeva?

It is stated that the mukta, having entered Vasudeva, does not enter

another form or being, and that since Vasudeva is the Supreme, there is no return to the world for him either.

At this, one may wonder if the mukta, having entered Vasudeva, finds mukti a pleasant experience, or perhaps if (s)he is simply locked up forever in such a situation of eternal tedium as any thinking person would dearly wish to avoid. Also, perhaps the mukta can stop being devoted to Krishna, once mukti is achieved? To answer these, it is stated:

##

(atriH)

yo yAnichchhennaraH kAmAnnArI vA varavarNinI |
tAn.h samApnoti vipulAn.h samArAdhya janArdanam.h || 32 ||

##

Whatever desires may be wished for, either by a man or by a woman, that is fulfilled by Him, to them, who worship Janardana excellently.

It is clarified that the mukta enjoys any and all cherished desires in

mukti, and is not forced into an inert or unpleasant state; furthermore, the mukta also worships Janardana with devotion constantly, and does not desire His absence at any time.

At this, one may yet wonder why it is that an individual is said to enjoy so in mukti, and yet is seen to suffer so much in the world. Given the presence of suffering in the world, might there not be suffering in mukti as well? Or in other words, if enjoyment is the individual's own nature, why does such enjoyment not occur in the world as well? To answer these, it is said:

##

(kaushikaH)

anArAdhitagovindAste narA duHkhabhAginaH |

ArAdhya vAsudevaM syuH sarvAnandaikabhAjinaH || 33 ||

##

These humans suffering sorrow for having failed to worship Govinda; were they to worship Vasudeva (and obtain mukti), they would experience all manner of bliss.

It is stated, therefore, that lack of worship of Krishna is the cause for there being a lot of suffering in the world; were this to be remedied and were people to worship Him, they would obtain the joys of their own natures as His servants.

On reading the previous verses which deny the claim that only the

worship of the formless yields mukti, by showing that the the worship of Krishna gives such a result, one still could carry the doubt that the 'vyUha' descriptions of Vasudeva, etc., are ultimately only of transitional worth, and cannot be considered the supreme truth. It still could be possible that one could attain liberation by worshipping the formless absolute, rather than Vasudeva, and in fact, the latter is only for those not qualified for the former. To answer this, it is said:

##

(brahmA)

bAhubhyAM sAgaraM tartuM ka ichchheta pumAn.h bhuvi |
vAsudevamanArAdhya ko moxaM gantumichchhati || 34 ||

##

Just as with one who wishes to cross an ocean by the strength of his arms; is the lot of the one who wishes to attain moksha without worshipping Vasudeva.

It is clarified that there indeed is no other possible method to

obtain moksha than the worship of Vasudeva, and thus, such worship is not merely for those unqualified.

Even so, one may have the doubt that the uniqueness claimed for Krishna's worship can only apply to those still in the grip of the delusion about the reality of the world; it cannot apply to one who has already realized the higher truth, to wit, that the world and all its fruits of joy and suffering are illusory. Hence, such a one can avoid worship and yet reach the goal. To remove this doubt, it is said:

##

(parAsharaH)

kR^ite pApe.anutApo vai yasya pUmsaH prajAyate |
prAyashchittaM tu tasyoktaM harisaMsmaraNaM param.h || 35 ||

##

For one who suffers as a result of sins committed;
the greatest remedy for the same has been stated to be the
constant remembrance of Hari.

The point that is made is that for all embodied creatures, suffering occurs, and "realizing" that the suffering is illusory does not stop the same; in fact, only by realizing that it is real and needs to be stopped, would one make progress. As such, anyone who claims to realize that suffering is illusory, and yet manifests the effects of the same in his appearance and conduct, must be disclaimed as a hoax

- denial of facts cannot be the basis for a sound spiritual quest,

and only a rational acceptance that yes, one has sinned, and that one needs to do something about it, namely meditate upon Sri Hari, would do.

At that, one may still say that while the learned who have realized

the illusoriness of the world may yet appear to suffer—their bodies may wither and wear, and they may show visible signs of human misery

- it still is improper to say that they are mistaken, for surely

their steadfastness of belief alone indicates that they are right and

have achieved victory over their senses, and that even their apparent suffering is a mere illusion. To remove this doubt, it is said:

##

(brahmA)

nahyapuNyavatAM loke mUDhAnAM kuTilAtmanAm.h |
bhaktirbhavati govinde smaraNaM kIrtanaM tathA || 36 ||

##

In the world, in those lacking merit, who are foolish, and have deceit in their hearts, there does not occur devotion towards Govinda, or His remembrance, or His worship.

It is clarified that it is not appropriate to assume that a steadfast

belief that one can lift oneself up to mukti by one's own bootstraps, so to speak, without earning Krishna's grace in the prescribed manner, is indicative of undesirable qualities in the individual, rather than correctness of such belief. As such, the thesis that realizing the illusoriness of suffering is a valid and superior alternative to Krishna's worship, has no basis.

At that, one may still ask: if those who, in spite of appearing to suffer in the world, still steadfastly hold on to their belief in the

illusoriness of the same, are to be condemned in this fashion, then could anyone at all be considered to have risen above usual worldly squalor, to have achieved victory over their senses, and to be noble and worthy of praise therefore? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

> tadaiva purushho mukto janmaduHkhajarAdibhiH |
> jitendriyo vishuddhAtmA yadaiva smarate harim.h || 37 ||

##

> Only one who constantly remembers Hari [with the realization of the truth of His causation of] mukti, birth, suffering, old age, etc., can be considered to have won over his senses, and to be of pure nature.

It is clarified that rather than assuming that a certain someone is pure and thus whatever (s)he says must be correct, one must judge whether what that someone says is correct, and thus judge whether (s)he is pure; for while one does not have direct perception of another's nature, it is possible for one to infer the same based on the knowledge manifested.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to have the doubt that it is not possible for one to know when someone is really remembering Hari; fakery is definitely possible, and it is possible that someone may make the pretense of remembering Hari although his mind is really on other

things—as such, the statement that one who remembers Hari is alone to be considered noble, is of no value. To answer this, it is said:

##

prApte kaliyuge ghore dharmaj~nAnavivarjite |
na kashchitsmarate devaM vishhNuM kalimalApaham.h || 38 ||

##

In this fierce Kali-Yuga, which lacks knowledge and dharma;
hardly anyone remembers Vishnu, the Deity who removes the
filth of Kali.

As such, it is clarified that while on a surface level it is possible for

fakery to give the impression that someone is engrossed in Vishnu, the scam can be easily noticed when one perceives incorrect understanding, lack of observance of the rules of conduct, and such. Such a person cannot under any circumstance be described as one devoted to Hari. By describing the rarity of the kind of person described, one is cautioned not to consider all that glitters as gold, and to in fact know that most of it is anything but.

At this, one may ask why it is that one who does not have knowledge of Vishnu as is, be considered barred from remembering Him? And in fact, what is that special knowledge which is to be known, before it may be said that He is actually remembered by one? To answer these, it is said:

##

na kalau devadevasya sarvaduHkhApahAriNaH |
karoti martyo mUDhAtmA smaraNaM kIrtanaM hareH || 39 ||

##

In the Kali-Yuga, a mortal fool does not carry out the worship
of the Deity of deities, the Hari who removes all manner of sorrow.

By this verse, it is indicated that worship may be faulty on at least two counts—one, failure to realize that Vishnu is the Deity of deities, i.e., that there exists a gradation of worth and there are lesser deities who in turn worship Vishnu as per their capacities; two, failure to realize that Vishnu is called 'Hari' because of His extraordinary capacity and potency in removing **all** distress and not just some, and that in fact, only He can ultimately remove any distress, whatever be the apparent cause or agent. Thus, by denying the facts of tAratamya, or by ignorance about the nature of Hari as the remover of all distress, one's worship is vitiated.

At this, one may wonder what is the big deal with these tenets; what is the gain if one does know them and remember Vishnu accordingly? To answer that, it is said:

##

ye smaranti sadA vishhNuM vishuddhenAntarAtmanA |
te prayAnti bhavaM tyaktvA vishhNulokamanAmayam.h || 40 ||

##

They who remember Vishnu constantly with clean minds (i.e., those not fouled by incorrect knowledge as described above); they obtain upon leaving the world, the abode of Vishnu which is free of grief.

It is indicated that only by knowing Vishnu in the manner stated, may one obtain the desired end of a place in His abode, where there is no distress.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to doubt whether the result claimed can in fact be obtained: for just as birth itself entails eventual death, it is the case that death entails future birth, and there can be no end to this cycle. As such, how can one expect not to acquire a new body upon the lapse of a certain one? To answer this, it is said:

##

garbhajanmajarAmR^ityuduHkhasaMsArabandhanaiH |
na bAdhyate naro nityaM nArAyaNamanusmaran.h || 41 ||

##

The worldly bondages of presence in the womb, birth, old age, death, and sorrow, do not afflict forever the human who worships Narayana.

It is clarified that while it is indeed true that birth and death entail

each other in ordinary cases, the sole exception is for the worshipper of

Vishnu—it is not to be said that such a one will forever remain in

bondage, and this marks a distinction from every other kind of individual or worshipper.

At this, one may wonder how it can be that even a worshipper of Krishna fares any better than any other person, while in bondage: for even if it be granted that (s)he eventually breaks out of the cycle of endless suffering, surely there is nothing better about being in it for him/her than for anyone else? And as such, the worship of Krishna would only count towards a result alleged to occur at some uncertain date in future, and there is no palpable improvement in one's existing or immediate circumstances or fate. To answer this, it is said:

##

yamamArgaM mahAghoraM narakANi yamaM tathA |
svapne.api naiva pashyeta yaH smaredgaruDadhvajam.h || 42 ||

##

The extremely gory path of Yama, the various hells, and Yama himself;
are not seen even in dreams by one who remembers the One who has Garuda
for his mount.

As such, it is stated that even while in creation, the worshipper of

Vishnu fares significantly better than another, for not having to suffer the extremely painful travails that are the lot of the latter.

At this, one may wonder what the qualities or appearance of such a

worshipper are: it has previously been stated that such a one does not have incorrect understanding and is not lacking in his observances, but a positive description is required. To provide one, it is said:

##

hR^idi rUpaM mukhe nAma naivedyamudare hareH |
pAdodakaM cha nirmAlyaM mastake yasya so.achyutaH || 43 ||

##

One who bears Hari's form in his heart, His name in his utterances, and
His naivedya in his belly; and also His tIrtha and nirmAlya on his head,
such a one is [a worshipper of] Achyuta.

At this, one may yet ask how it can be that a worshipper of Krishna does not have to suffer the path of ***, and the like, for even such a one is sure to have the karma burden that would necessitate such suffering. As such, the claims that have been made about the superiority of Vishnu's worship don't make any sense. To answer this, it is said:

##

govindasmaraNaM puMsAM pApArAshiM mahAchalam.h |
asaMshayaM dahatyAshu tUlarAshimivAnalaH || 44 ||

##

The enormous heap of sins, which is indissoluble (in any other fashion), will by memory of Govinda; surely be destroyed as is a huge quantity of cotton by fire.

It is stated that while it is generally true that the indissoluble burden of karma that one has garnered will necessitate suffering, the worship of

Krishna is unique in that it alone can destroy all the mountainous

quantity of it at once, without one having to suffer an intolerable amount to expend the same, and this is the secret of why such a worshipper does not have to suffer as ordinary mortals do.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to object that the

benefit claimed is still very intangible and unproven: the claim that one will not suffer in the afterlife means nothing to one who is concerned about suffering at present. Also, it is easy to make such unverifiable claims, and such cannot be the basis of one's actions. To answer this, it is said:

##

(agastyaH)

smaraNAdeva kR^ishhNasya pApasaN^ghAtapaJNjaram.h |
shatadhA bhedamAyAti girirvajrahato yathA || 45 ||

##

Only by remembrance of Krishna, the cage created by sins;
is shattered a hundredfold, just as the mountains by 'vajra'.

It is not just in an imperceptible afterlife, but even in one's present

existence, that one can experience benefits by worship of Krishna. For it is well-known that in spite of myriad accomplishments and gains, individuals in the world are forever subjected to crippling limits on their freedoms, which cannot be got rid of in any manner. And what is suffering, if not a lack of freedom? The limitations created upon one's enjoyment even in one's lifetime, by sins, can only be removed by worship

of Krishna, which thus is completely unique even from a purely everyday perspective. (Note: the reference to mountains and 'vajra' is to the story where mountains are stated to have had their wings clipped—quite literally—by Indra's weapon 'vajra'. The idea is that just as the mountains lost their erstwhile mobility and thus their ability to hurt by crushing, so also, sins lose their capacity to cause suffering, when one worships Krishna.)

At this, one may have the doubt: let's grant that all the previous is correct, and that one does in fact benefit even in one's lifetime, by worshipping Krishna. However, what's to say that in a subsequent lifetime, things will not go back to square one? -- as surely as one has no memory of any previous existences and no skills that may have been learned then, the worship of Krishna will lapse when the present body dies, and then one will have to make a fresh start. To answer this, it is said:

##

kR^ishhNe ratA kR^ishhNamanusmarantaH
tadbhAvitAstadgatamAnasAshcha |
bhinne.api dehe pravishanti vishhNuM
haviryathA mantrahutaM hutAshe || 46 ||

##

One who is engaged in Krishna, who constantly remembers Krishna;
who has absorbed His concepts, and whose mind has gone to Him;
even upon obtaining different bodies, he enters Vishnu;

just as an oblation which is offered with the proper incantation reaches the Deity.

It is clarified that the passing of one's body should not be considered a possible barrier to one's spiritual progress. However, might this not mean that spiritual effort may be safely put off for a future lifetime, or for a future time when one is old or retired or has nothing else to do? It is indicated otherwise:

##

sAhAnistanmahachchhidraM sA chAndhajaDamUkatA |
yanmuhUrtaM xaNaM vA.api vAsudevo na chintyate || 47 ||

##

It is a great loss comparable to blindness, paralysis, or dumbness; for one to spend a muhUrta (~15 minutes), or even a moment, without thinking of Vasudeva.

It is stated that while it is the case that while even mere thinking of

Krishna is of great benefit in one's lifetime and also thereafter, and

while one's sAdhana can continue even through changes of bodies, it is folly to think that one may postpone it with no loss to oneself.

At this, one may wonder if one can ever possibly make up for one's past misconduct—specifically, in not worshipping Krishna all through one's lifetime and also in lifetimes past. For even granting that the burden of ongoing or possible future sin is relieved by such worship, what about the travails caused by past burden? To answer this, it is said:

##

nArAyaNo nAma naro narANAM
prasiddha choraH kathitaH pR^ithivyAm.h |
anekajanmArjitapApa saJNchayaM
dahatyasheshhaM smR^itimAtrayaiva || 48 ||

##

There is, by name of Narayana, a famous Robber
in the world, who is so called that by men;
because the sin of many lifetimes, He incinerates
without residue, even upon merely remembering Him.

It is stated that even with respect to the karma-burden accrued from actions past, Krishna is still the best solution, and such does not present any problem where He is concerned.

Upon reading the previous verse, one is apt to have the doubt: perhaps it is the case that while the worship of Krishna is very efficacious in removing the undesirable, it does not actually give any desired ends in life at all, and what one would end up with would be a sort of stasis with

no enjoyment and no suffering. As it is seen in the world that people are willing even to tolerate lots of suffering for some enjoyment, it would have to be that even at the cost of accepting some suffering, one must worship other deities, or conduct other kinds of activities meant to produce enjoyment. This objection is refuted as follows in the next two verses:

##

yasya saMsmaraNAdeva vAsudevasya chakrINaH |
koTijanmArjitaM pApaM tatxaNAdeva nashyati || 49 ||

kiM tasya bahubhistIrthaiH kiM tapobhiH kimadvaraiH |
yo nityaM dhyAyate devaM nArAyaNamananyadhIH || 50 ||

##

By the mere remembrance of Vasudeva, the bearer of the
discus, the sins of a crore lifetimes is destroyed instantly;
so to what purpose would there be (even) many pilgrimages, or
penance, or boons, for one who thinks constantly and with a
single mind, of that Narayana?

In these verses, a nyAya (a logical device or tool) known as ‘kaimutya’ is employed. What this nyAya states is that any means sufficient to accomplish the difficult can accomplish the easy, and the standard example is that anything that can be procured with fifty units of currency can be procured with a hundred. Using the same standard, the verses say that

since the worship of Vasudeva is so highly effective that it can destroy the sins of ten million past lifetimes instantly, is it reasonable to expect that it is any less effective at giving joy or worldly ends, than are other activities and dispositions which do not have nearly the same power?

At this, one may object that it is all well and good to say that because the worship of Sri Hari has benefits not obtainable by other activities, it must be a superior form of activity. However, in the world, it is not always seen that worshippers of Narayana fare better in any tangible way, and they in fact have serious flaws and difficulties, more often than not; hence one is apt to doubt all that has been said so far. To address this, the next verse says:

##

ye mAnavA vigatarAgaparAvaraj~nA
nArAyaNaM suraguruM satataM smaranti |
dhyAnena tena hatakilbishhachetanAste
mAtuH payodhararasaM na punaH pibanti || 51 ||

##

Those humans who, having lost all sensory desire and mindful of

the Supreme; remember constantly Narayana, the Guru of the deities;
by thinking of Him, they lose flaws in their natures; and do not
have to drink a mother’s milk again.

The verse clarifies that it is necessary for one to be cleansed of all

shortcomings in one's character by His grace, and to constantly think of

Him, being aware of Him as superior to all that is perceived and not

perceived, and also as the Lord of all other deities; then, it can be expected that one will not have to suffer the pangs of birth, living, and such, ever again. However, when one still has desire for sensory enjoyment, or when one's understanding of Krishna is incomplete and incorrect, one cannot expect the results to be quite the same.

At this, one may wonder if the worship of Krishna is at all possible for someone like oneself: after all, one is a creature of the world and has to subsist in an environment not at all conducive to single-minded focus upon the Supreme; one is also always liable to fall prey to *** and other such shortcomings, and hence one cannot hope to do what is required. Given this, might it not be the case that the worship of Krishna is infeasible where one is concerned, so that one would be better advised to focus on other activities—even those of smaller gain—that one can actually expect to complete? The next verse answers this as follows:

##

he chitta chintayesveha vAsudevamaharnisham.h |
nUnaM yashchintitaM puMsAM hanti saMsArabandhanam.h || 52 ||

##

Hey Mind, be focused always on the Vasudeva day and night;
[for] even if He be thought of once by a person, his worldly
bonds are [eventually] destroyed.

It is clarified that while it is indeed a matter of concern and regret

that one is unable to rise to the standard where one is required to be, it still would not do for one to simply give up the attempt, pleading incompetence. Indeed, it is necessary for one to redouble one's effort for that very reason, and practice constantly that which one is not skilled at doing. The verse also addresses the deity of the mind to show his grace upon one by shifting one's mind away from other attractions and bringing it upon Krishna constantly.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to object that it is not proper to ask one to subjugate one's intellectual faculties in this manner. One is intelligent, creative, the master of many arts, and such, and only a fool would expect that one would throw it all away just to serve Krishna. Indeed, if one were to allow one's mind to atrophy, it would be a great disservice to oneself and to the world at large. To answer this, it is said:

##

AloDhya sarvashAstrANi vichArya cha punaH punaH |

idamekaM sunishhpannaM dhyeyo nArAyaNaH sadA || 53 ||

(vishhNu-purANa)

##

Having studied all sciences, and having reasoned upon them time and again; this alone is concluded—that Narayana is to be thought of always.

As such, it is clarified that it is not necessary or desirable for one to cease all other kinds of intellectual endeavors in favor of thought of Krishna—it indeed is the case that having studied any or all other subjects to fulfillment, such thought of Krishna is indicated unambiguously, and such a mature decision in this regard is of greater profit than an unwise early choice.

It has been stated that by complete study and understanding of all subjects the dhyAna of Narayana is indicated—but in what manner exactly? The next verse answers:

##

smR^ite sakalakalyANabhAjanaM yatra jAyate |
purushhastamajaM nityaM vrajAmi sharaNaM harim.h || 54 ||

##

By memory of Whom, the enjoyment of all that is auspicious occurs;
that Hari, the Purusha, the Eternal, I surrender myself to.

It is indicated that while thought or understanding of other subjects for their own sakes can bring some satisfaction or enjoyment directly or otherwise, they cannot be ultimately fulfilling or bring complete unalloyed enjoyment; therefore, surrender to Hari is clearly decided by one who has studied the sciences correctly and decides that there is no recourse except He for one who wishes for total, undiluted satisfaction.

However, perhaps the learned one still decides to stick to another means or end, rather than worship of Krishna, because (s)he is looking for some smaller result, and doesn't mind not having undiluted enjoyment? It is indicated otherwise:

##

vedeshhu yaj~neshhu tapassu chaiva
dAneshhu tIrtheshhu vrateshhu chaiva |
ishhTeshhu pUrteshhu cha yatpradishhTaM
puMsAM smR^ite tat.h khalu vAsudeve || 55 ||

##

By [study of] the Vedas, by yaj~na-s, and by penance;
by acts of charity, by pilgrimages, and by observances;
all the desired ends that are so achievable;
may all be achieved by a person by remembering Vasudeva.

Clearly, the learned one realizes that even for other ends and smaller benefits, the worship of Krishna is the optimal solution, and is hence to be preferred over other kinds of actions. This gives a second reason perceived by the learned: not only is worship of Krishna a source of more comprehensive and pure enjoyment, it is also an easier source of enjoyment.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is still apt to ask: what

if the learned one, for whatever reason, decides or desires to do things the hard way, and does not care that worship of Krishna is the easier solution? Surely, then such worship is not pursued by such a one? The next verse answers this:

##

ArAdhyaiva naro vishhNuM manasA yadyadichchhati |

phalaM prApnotyavikalaM bhUri svalpamathApi vA || 56 ||

##

Only by having worshipped Vishnu, any desire of the mind;
comes to fruition without fail—be it very large (difficult), or
very small (easy).

Therefore, the learned one concludes that even though alternative

routes are available, in addition to being incomplete and difficult, they are also of uncertain success, and may or may not bring the ends that one wishes to obtain. It is only by worship of Krishna that one is sure to obtain the ends that one desires.

Hence, the preceding three verses state three kinds of superiority

that worship of Krishna has over other activities that may bring joy

- comprehensiveness, ease, and certainty—respectively.

At this, one may have the doubt that a claim that worship of Vishnu does not fail, is not necessarily credible to a learned one, since all other kinds of actions are of uncertain success, and there is no experience that anyone has which indicates that there exists any such recourse. The quality described is thus most unusual, and one would have to suspect that it is mere poetic exaggeration. If it does not in fact exist, then the worship of Krishna would have to be considered akin to all other actions only. So on what grounds can one expect that it is not? The next verse answers as follows:

##

yannAmakIrtanaM bhaktyA vilApanamanuttamam.h |
maitreyAsheshhapApAnAM dhAtUnAmiva pAvakaH || 57 ||

##

By worship of whose name with devotion, and by constant singing of whose praises, the Benevolent, all of one’s endless sins melt away as metal subjected to fire.

It is clarified that worship of Krishna is not incidentally or

accidentally useful: it is useful specifically because He is a Benevolent entity whose compassion is unmatched by others. Thus it is that one’s suffering is destroyed when one applies for His grace, and this is a clear statement of difference with respect to all other actions.

At this, one may have the doubt whether Krishna’s compassion is only available to those of rigorous standards of observance, who are able to maintain a state of constant devotion in spite of being faced with great difficulties in the hostile world. If so, someone like oneself had better start thinking of the next-best option, even if it be a lesser one. The next verse answers this as follows:

##

kalikalmashhamatyugraM narakArtipradaM nR^iNAm.h |
prayAti nilayaM sadyaH sakR^itsaN^kIrtite.achyute || 58 ||

##

The scum of Kali, and the exceedingly fearsome aspects of ***,
are certainly overcome, and His abode obtained, even by one who
worships Achyuta with devotion once.

While compassion is doubtless a quality of the Lord, it is not the only quality, nor even the only significant quality. The quality that He is without any manner of flaw ('chyuti') is something for one to realize, and by doing so and worshipping Him as 'a-chyuta' or the Flawless One, one is enabled to overcome all of one's myriad flaws that cause otherwise-ceaseless distress.

At this, one may ask: even if it be granted that Krishna is compassionate, and also that He is Flawless, it could still be the case that the road of His service is an arduous one, even if it eventually brings a good result. What if one does not have the stomach for the travails that may result from His service? The next verse answers this:

##

anAyAsena chA.ayanti muktiM keshavasaMshritAH |
tadvighAtAya jAyante shakrAdyAH paripanthinaH || 59 ||

##

Without any stress attain mukti, those who rely on Keshava;

in order to remove such (stress, etc.), are present the
deities headed by Indra, as traveling companions.

It is clarified that not only does one not have to think that one's

road to liberation will be arduous and impossible, it is also the case that even higher beings such as Indra are also travelers upon the same path, and one would certainly do better to travel along with them and enjoy the safety of their powerful company, rather than proceed along other routes where one will have to rely only on one's own inadequate skills and abilities for safety.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may yet wonder if there could still be another solution that has all the qualities claimed for Krishna's worship, in greater measure than the latter. If so, would that one not be the right choice? The next verse clarifies this point:

##

chatuHsAgaramAsAdya jaMbudvIpottame kvachit.h |
na pumAn.h keshavAdanyaH sarvapApachikitsakaH || 60 ||

##

In the Jambudvipa surrounded by four oceans (*),
there is none other than Keshava, for a cure to all sins.

As such, there need be no doubt that the worship of Krishna is to be undertaken, for in addition to all the qualities that it has in comparison with other kinds of activities, it is also unique in being the only one of its own kind.

However, one is apt to wonder if one's worship is really worthwhile. One learns or reads of people having performed great penances and austerities in times past, and realizes that one is unable to do anything approaching the same. As such, where is the point in one pressing on with one's puny efforts that fall so far short of what earlier seekers have done, that perhaps what is said here doesn't even apply because one is so much inferior? The next verse answers this:

##

yadabhyarchya hariM bhaktyA kR^ite varshhashatairapi |
phalaM prApnotyavikalaM kalau saN^kIrtya keshavam.h || 61 ||

##

What can be obtained in the Krta [Yuga] by worshipping Hari with

devotion for hundreds of years; such a fruit can be obtained without difficulty by praising Keshava in the Kali [Yuga].

Therefore, while it is true that one's observances do not match up to those of seekers of old, at least in terms of gross worth, they are to be considered as significant and fulfilling as the latter, and one is to have

no doubts upon this account.

However, one may ask on what grounds such an exception, albeit a

convenient one, is justified. The next verse clarifies this point:

##

xIyate tu yadA dharmaH prApte ghore kalau yuge |
tadA na kIrtayetkashchinmuktidaM devamachyutam.h || 62 ||

##

As righteousness ebbs with the onset of the fearsome Kali age;
there is hardly any praise of the Giver of liberation, the
Flawless Deity.

Therefore, it is seen that in the world, there is hardly any worship of

the one who gives liberation, and even supposedly religious people are in pursuit of other ends, and even worship other deities and non-deities who do not give mukti, and also impute flaws upon Krishna due to lack of understanding, even when they do deign to worship Him. As such, worship of Krishna as the flawless giver of liberation is as unique in the Kali-Yuga as His worship for hundreds of years in a better age when many people did worship Him constantly with correct understanding would have been, and needs must qualify for the same result.

At this, one is liable to wonder if one's worship of Krishna (if any), being motivated mostly by immediate adversity of circumstance, by the following of elders whose precepts are not clearly understood by oneself, etc., is of any use. One certainly cannot claim to have grasped Krishna as the giver of mukti and made a mature decision to worship Him, based on such understanding. One may also not realize His lack of flaws, in spite of one's efforts. The next verse addresses this question:

##

(parAshara)

avashenApi yannAmni kIrtite sarvapAtakaiH |
pumAn.h vimuchyate sadyaH siMhatrastA mR^igA iva || 63 ||

(vishhNu-purANa)

##

Even if His name be uttered due to force, a person is freed of all difficulties, just as a beast flees when approached by a lion.

Hence, it is the case that even one's inadequate worship, which is not based on sound understanding, is not to be rejected in favor of anything else.

At this, one may wonder why it is that so much suffering is seen to occur in the world: if things were really as easy as is described, would there not be a lot of efforts at practicing the remedy suggested? The next verse addresses this doubt:

##

nArAyaNetimantro.asti vAgasti vashavartinI |
tathA.api narake ghore patantItyetadadbhutam.h || 64 ||

##

There is the 'nArAyaNa' mantra, and the speech that is at one's command; even then to fearsome *** fall [a lot of people], this is truly amazing.

Therefore, it is admitted without prejudice to Krishna's worship, that widespread failure to practice the same in spite of dire consequences occurring due to such failure, is a cause for surprise, when one really considers it.

==

(*) This is a description of something in some manner, although what and in which manner, remains to be decided. There is also a conflict with the 'bhUgoLa-varNanaM' description of the universe as being made up of **seven**

oceans with an island in each of them—evaM cha pR^ithivI seyaM sasaptadvIpasAgarA; laxayojanavistAramadhyastadvIpataH kramAt.h (verse 55). However, it is certain that these descriptions are not of the physical universe—by their non-correspondence with the physical universe as known from other sources, and also because entities which are not physical or sense-perceivable according to shaastra—such as Vishnu-kUrma, Vaikuntha, andhantamas, etc.—are described.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may wonder if it is indeed correct to express surprise at the world's not worshipping Krishna in a big way; for while it may be the case that certain individuals could profit by such worship, there is no indication that any large-scale benefit to society or the world as a whole would derive. Surely, it is not right to say that the worship of Krishna is a one-size-fits-all prescription. For that, it is said:

##

ArtA vishhaNNAH shithilAshcha bhItAH
ghoreshhu cha vyAdhishhu vartamAnA |
saN^kIrtya nArAyaNashabdamAtraM
vimuktaduHkhAH sukhino bhavanti || 65 ||

##

Those afflicted with pain, the sorrowful, the feeble, and the fearful;
and also those suffering deadly diseases;

by merely reciting the name of Narayana alone;
they become free of suffering, and obtain happiness.

Therefore, it is the case that no matter what the proximate cause of one's suffering, the worship of Krishna is always indicated as a solution to the same. It is also the case that the incidence of distress in the world is very high because there is no widespread worship of Krishna in the world.

At this, one may ask if it is indeed feasible that large number of people could worship Krishna with steady devotion—surely they cannot, for there are bound to be those among them who are of unsteady temperament and the like. What of them? The next verse answers as follows:

##

sakR^idabhyarchitaM yaistu kR^ishhNeti na vishanti te |
garbhAgAra gR^ihaM mAturyamalokaM cha duHsaham.h || 66 ||

##

By those who have worshipped, taking the name of Krishna, even once;
there is no re-entry into the uterus of a mother, and also to the
abode of Yama which is of great suffering.

Therefore, it is the case that even for those who may appear to be

unqualified for worship of Krishna, such worship is certainly a viable and

desirable action.

However, one may ask whether, as acts of social benefit go, the worship of Krishna as an action by the individual, rather than by many individuals forming a society, is any better than the performance of other acts of religious merit which may bring welfare to society. The next verse takes up the issue:

##

kva nAkapR^ishhThagamanaM punarAvR^ittilaxaNam.h |
kva japo vAsudeveti muktibIjamanuttamam.h || 67 ||

##

To what purpose the entry into the gates of heaven, which is
characterized by eventual return; when the meditation upon
Him as Vasudeva is the source of mukti, which is the highest end?

Therefore, while other acts of merit can bring welfare to the individual and even to society, any results obtained by them are necessarily transitory and reversible, and hence of less worth: what is ultimately desirable is a solution that is for good, and requires no further effort thereafter. Such a solution can only be the worship of Krishna as Vasudeva, the giver of mukti, and no other, for only mukti has the desired characteristic.

There may arise a doubt at this point: tall claims have been made about

how people can reach mukti and even solve all their worldly problems simply by worshipping Krishna or even by just uttering His name. This is clearly unacceptable, for such a solution is not observed to be effective in practice—people continue to suffer even after they worship, and even the saintly continue to be reborn after leading pious lives. What gives? The next verse answers this question:

##

buddhyA buddhvA vadasvainaM haririttyaxaradvyayam.h |
smaraNAtkIrtanAdyasya na punarjAyate kvachit.h || 68 ||

##

By having understood Him with all of one's mind, uttering the name of 'Hari' thereupon, remembering Him, and worshipping Him, no one is ever reborn.

There is a lot of false practice and pretense seen in the world, and one should endeavor to see that one does not indulge in such as well. It cannot be admitted that mere utterance of words without proper knowledge of their import brings any significant benefit, and indeed, it is not being suggested that they do. It is only be fully grasping the Lord exactly as per one's capacity, and then worshipping Him with the complete understanding so obtained, that the results claimed can be obtained. Knowing Him other than as He is, or by not knowing Him at all, will not yield the desired results, and things must be weighed in that light. Hence the importance of exact, uncompromising, understanding.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to wonder exactly what it is that one could possibly do to obtain such learning about Krishna as is expected of one, for one is not competent to develop any such merely by wishing for it, and it could be doubted whether any such could ever be hoped for. For that, the next verse says:

##

he jihve mama niHsnehe hariM kiM nAnubhAshhase |
hariM vadasya kalyANI saMsArodadhinaurhariH || 69 ||

##

O ‘jihvA’, why do you so mercilessly not cause me to utter [the names of] Hari? Tell me about Hari (or: cause me to utter Hari), for Hari is the remedy for crossing over samsAra.

In this verse, the goddess of learning is addressed as the ‘abhimAninI’ of one’s tongue, and is implored to cause one to utter the names of Hari, and to cause one to develop an understanding of Hari, which otherwise would not be possible. Hence, the verse indicates that the proper worshipful attitude towards inquiry is necessary for one to progress in the same, and it is also necessary for one to propitiate lesser deities who are greater than oneself, as servants of the Lord who can enable one to reach Him.

At this, one may wonder why that should be so: surely it may be possible for one to find some other means not involving the worship of other

deities, to gain knowledge of Krishna in some manner? The next verse takes up the issue as follows:

##

asAre khalu saMsAre sArAtsArataro hariH |
puNyahInA na vindanti sAraN^gAshcha yathA jalam.h || 70 ||

##

In the entire world which is [otherwise] without basis, Hari is indeed the most essential basis; this is not perceived by those without merit, just as a 'sAraN^ga' fails to perceive water.

A 'sAraN^ga', also known as a 'chAtaka', is a mythical bird said to drink only raindrops, and is hence said to fail to cognize water even when present all around it. So also, a person who fails to obtain merit, i.e., the grace of the goddess of learning, in the prescribed fashion, will never develop the wisdom to grasp Krishna as being the basis or foundation of the world, and will ultimately only founder for not seeing the world as having any basis; the unsteadiness of temperament and the consequent unhappiness that is sure to result from lack of knowledge of the essence of life and existence, are obvious. As such is to be avoided, one must act as instructed.

At this, one may ask why it should be expected that even one who does obtain merit in the required fashion, necessarily fares any better than one who does not—there is no cogent explanation that would enable one

to decide. If there is no advantage even to one who does obtain merit, why bother? The next verse answers as follows:

##

kuruxetreNa kiM tasya kiM kAshyA pushhkareNa kim.h |
jihvAgre vartate yasya harirityaxaradvayam.h || 71 ||

##

To what purpose [a pilgrimage to] Kurukshetra, to what Kashi, and to what Pushkara? For one, at the tip of whose tongue reside the bisyllabic word 'Hari'?

Hence, it is the case that one who does serve as advised and does obtain merit as required, obtains a result which far exceeds that obtained by ordinary individuals through great effort at pilgrimages, etc.; so much so that pilgrimages, &c., in the ordinary sense become utterly useless to such a person.

At this, one may object that such a statement of advantage is utterly preposterous: pilgrimages, &c., are well established as being sources of succor and good results, and they must never be played down as has been attempted. It is also not at all clear why the worship of the goddess of learning should necessarily confer such an advantage to the seeker—why (s)he can achieve such benefit as cannot be had even from pilgrimages, merely by uttering Hari's name. As such, the claim must be considered bogus for other reasons as well. The next verse answers this as follows:

##

asAre khalu saMsAre sAramekaM nirUpitam.h |
samastalokanAthasya sAramArAdhanaM hareH || 72 ||

##

In this whole world, which is without a basis, this alone has been stated to be the basis; the worship of Hari, the Lord of the entire universe, is the basis (or point or purpose, of one's existence).

Therefore, one who has obtained merit understands that only the worship of Krishna makes one's life worth living—all other ends, being transitory and of no consequence in the ultimate reckoning, do not matter, and the pursuit of them, or the attempt to explain life by them, is always unsatisfactory. The worshipper who worships Krishna as being the Lord of all, and as being present everywhere, also must surely fare better than one who only worships Him as being present at a particular place of pilgrimage; for the former, pilgrimages as such also hold no particular value, since the Lord is known and worshipped everywhere with constant focus and wisdom. Hence the claim that one who obtains merit in the manner advised gains a greater result than is available even from strenuous pilgrimages and other actions; and hence, in turn, the need for one to pray in order that one may obtain true understanding.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may think that it is not

clear why the tongue must be employed in uttering the name of Krishna, in preference over its other uses, as suggested in verse 71 -- it has only been stated that one having knowledge of Him as the basis of the universe and worshipping Him as such is considered to have lived well. However, this does not exclude the possibility of one spending some or most of one's time in sensual pursuits, and devoting a little of one's time to worship of Krishna, or else worshipping Him in one's mind only without involving the organs of action. To answer this, it is said:

##

> sA jihvA yA hariM stauti tvachchittaM yattvadarpaNam.h |
> tAveva kevalau shlAghyau yau tvatpUjAkarau karau || 73 ||

##

> That alone is a tongue, which is employed in praising Hari; that alone is a mind, which is devoted to Him; those alone are the praiseworthy, which are hands employed to worship Him.

Therefore, it is not the case that worship done occasionally is adequate and that the senses may be employed otherwise as well—the senses reach their utmost fulfilment and their consummate potentials when employed in favor of Hari's service, and as such, it is unwise to think that employing them for sensuous causes is beneficial. No one considers himself or

herself as having benefited from a situation when the benefit received is far less than was possible; by the same token, one cannot consider oneself to have achieved any benefit from one's senses through their uses for sensuous pursuits, when far greater benefit would derive were they to be applied to serve Hari.

At this, one may object that even so, the claim made here—seen in conjunction with verse 71 -- is unacceptable, since pilgrimages and other activities are well known to be tools for spiritual and material progress. The bald claim, that only a sense organ which is applied in service of Krishna is one that has seen worthwhile use, is thus unacceptable. To answer this, it is said:

##

yastu vishhNuparo nityaM dR^iDhabhaktirjitendriyaH |
svagR^ihe.api vasan.h yAti tadvishhNoH paramaM padam.h || 74 ||

##

One who is of firm devotion, and having subdued the senses [in their quest for other ends] employs them constantly in favor of Vishnu; even if (s)he reside at home, attains that Vishnu's supreme abode.

Therefore, it is not only desirable that the senses be restricted from

pursuits other than the worship of Krishna, it is also necessary. While acts of virtue and wisdom are not ruled out for the worshipper of Krishna,

they must be performed as His service only, and not otherwise; thus it is also not possible for one to seek license for one's sensuous pursuits under the plea that meritorious acts other than the worship of Krishna are necessary, and thus other acts than the worship of Krishna are necessary in general. Even if one resides merely at home and lives a mundane life, without pilgrimages &c., as long as one's senses and actions are devoted to Vishnu and one does not act out of sensory desire, one is sure to attain His abode.

At that, one may wonder how exactly one is to acquire such complete control over the senses that they do not seek pleasure, but instead serve one well in worshipping Krishna. Since such control is essentially a prerequisite for proper worship, it cannot also be the result of worship itself, and hence must come from other means, i.e., by pilgrimages, etc., which thus must not be disregarded. To answer this, it is said:

##

sAdhu sAdhu mahAbhAga sAdhu dAnavanAshana |
yanmAM pR^ichchhasi dharmaj~na keshavArAdhanaM prati || 75 ||

##

O virtuous-minded and noble one; He is the consummate slayer of

demons; so why do you query me, O knower of righteousness, about
the worship of Keshava?

It is indicated that even for the purpose of achieving self-control and stability in one's mind and external circumstances, which may be described as slaying the demons within and without oneself, the worship of Krishna is the foremost solution; even if such worship be done with partial devotion and be inadequate in a larger sense, it is definitely indicated if one wishes to gain control over one's senses and complete devotion.

At this, one may ask why it should not be the case that performance of pilgrimages, etc., will give one devotion towards Krishna, so that for those such as oneself who are lacking devotion, such performances are the better interim solution, after which one may be able to worship well as required. To answer this, it is said:

##

> nimishhaM nimishhArdhaM vA muhUrtamapi bhArgava |
> nAdagdhAsheshhapApAnAM bhaktirbhavati keshave || 76 ||

##

> Whether it be for a minute, or a half-minute, or even for an instant, O Bhargava; for one whose ceaseless sins have not been annihilated, devotion towards Keshava does not happen.

Therefore, since it is the case that only by meditating upon Krishna

(verses 48, 49) that one can make a dent at the huge accumulation of past karma that would otherwise prevent one from achieving fulfilment, even an

inadequate worship of Krishna is definitely superior to performance of other actions, and the latter do not under any circumstances lead to devotion.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask why the worship of Krishna alone is considered the fulfilment of one's life, which must mean the fulfilment of one's mind as well: surely, even if one does not develop devotion as stated, the mind can still find fulfilment in other intellectual pursuits, and there need be no distress on this account. To answer this, it is stated:

##

kiM tena manasA kAryaM yanna tishhThati keshave |
mano muktiphalAvAptyai kAraNaM saprayojanam.h || 77 ||

##

What is the use of your mind, if it is not to reside in Keshava?
The use of the mind as a tool for obtaining mukti is its only good use.

While the mind may be used for any number of purposes, it is most useful to the individual when applied in the service of Krishna.

One may ask now—what is to be the basis for judging the external

senses; the above does not clarify—can they be used in other things?
To answer this comes the next verse:

##

rogo nAma na sA jihvA yayA na stUyate hariH |
gartau nAma na tau karNau yAbhyAM tatkarma na shrutam.h || 78 ||

##

It is a mere infestation, not a tongue, by which Hari is not praised;
they are mere holes, not ears, by which His deeds are not heard.

Therefore, the higher purpose of these senses is in the service of Hari, and no other use, even if pleasant, can count as meaningful. Since both pleasure and pain can be obtained on account of sensual pursuits, such pursuits cannot be considered pleasant alone, in fact. However, when the senses are employed in the Lord's service, the result is unalloyed.

At this, one may have the doubt that the characterization that a

sense-organ not employed in service of Hari is wasted, is inappropriate in case of those who may be handicapped in one or more ways; they surely cannot use their dysfunctional senses at all, hence it is wrong to say that their senses are wasted. Also, each "sense-organ" is actually a complex system of many closely associated units, and it is improper to

single out any one of them, even if an obvious one, as **the** sense-organ which is considered to have failed for not worshipping Hari. To answer this, it is stated:

##

nUnaM tatkaNThashAlUkaM athavA.apyupajihvikA |
rogo nAma na sA jihvA yA na vakti harerguNAn.h || 79 ||

##

Most certainly, the thorax is like a croaking frog, and such also is the uvula; that is an infestation, not a tongue, which does not state the qualities of Hari.

It is clarified that all the parts of the anatomy associated with speech may be considered to have been wasted, if the speech does not serve Hari. Also, the characterization applies when all the parts are in working order and the person makes a conscious choice not to involve the organ in the worship of Krishna. Hence, there is no conflict or inaccuracy as suggested.

At this, one may wonder what is to be the criterion of usefulness in

respect of those organs of action which cannot be directly involved in worship or understanding—for example, the feet; also with respect to the eyes, which only perceive but do not act. To address this, the next verse says:

##

bhArabhUtaiH padaiH kAryaM kimebhirnR^ipashordvija |
charaNau tau tu saphalau keshavAlayagAminau |
te cha netre mahAbhAga yAbhyAM sandR^ishyate hariH || 80 ||

##

What can be the use of the legs, which bear the weight of the human animal, O twice-born? The feet also are successful when they [are used to] proceed to Keshava's house; those eyes, too, O great one, by which is seen Hari.

These organs are thus properly utilized when they are applied in a fashion that enables one to worship Krishna, even given the constraints of their natures.

At this, one may ask why such a restriction should apply: let all the

organs that are directly involved in the worship be used for the same, but those not used for worship should be allowed to do other things. To counter this, the next verse says:

##

kiM tasya charaNaiH kAryaM vR^ithA saJNcharaNairdvija |
yairhi na vrajate jantuH keshavAlayadarshane || 81 ||

##

What is the use of your feet in useless wandering, O twice-born—which indeed does not carry the being to view the house of Keshava?

If it be the case that the feet have no role in the worship of Krishna and hence may be considered usable to do whatever, then it would be proper to ask if the feet are considered to have any purpose at all in one's life.
It cannot be said that they are themselves the source of pleasure a la the senses of touch and smell, for they are not; it cannot also be said that they will aid the other senses in sensual pursuits, for such pursuits have already been considered unwise—by the same token the feet could aid in Krishna's worship as well.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may wonder if the worship of Krishna is only an interim solution to be practiced until one develops a certain degree of maturity—perhaps it is the case that in one's present condition one must offer such worship, but when one has derived the benefit of the same, one can go on to better things, or seek sensual pursuits. The next verse answers this as follows:

##

vedavedAntavidushhAM munInAM bhAvitAtmanAM |

R^ishhitvamapi dharmaj~na vij~neyaM tatprasAdajam.h || 82 ||

##

For those skilled in the Veda-s and their ancillaries, the
saints and those who have realized the nature of the Supreme;
and even for those who have achieved R^ishhi-ness, O
righteous one, all these are to be known as being by His grace.

In other words, even in case of those who have achieved a certain standard of success or joy, there is no possibility of doing away with having to worship Krishna, and any joy that is derived only exists by His grace.

At this, one may ask: what joy? What is being talked about here? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

vichitraratnaparyante mahAbhoge cha bhoginaH |
ramante nAkanArIbhiH keshavasmaraNAtphalam.h || 83 ||

##

Endowed with rare gems, the greatest of joys are enjoyed
by these enjoyers in the company of celestial women, as a
result of remembering Keshava.

Thus, it is promised that any sensory satisfaction that one can wish for can be fulfilled to the utmost degree by worshipping Krishna.

At this, one may object that saying so does nothing to distinguish

Krishna’s worship from the results enjoyed by those who carry out acts of great merit such as ‘ashva-medha’, etc., and hence there is nothing special shown at all. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ashvamedhasahasrANAM yaH sahasraM samAcharet.h |
nAsau tatphalamApnoti tadbhaktyairyadavApyate || 84 ||

##

By one who conducts a thousand ashva-medha-s a thousand times over; such a result is not obtained, as is obtained by devotion towards Him.

Therefore, while it may appear that there is a similarity of benefits

obtained from worship of Krishna and from other sources, there really is no comparison as the latter is so vastly superior. It is folly to think that another source could be as beneficial.

At this, one may wonder if the performance of yaj~na-s, etc., is an easier means of obtaining satisfaction, even if it be granted that it brings less of the same. The next verse answers this as follows:

##

re re manushhyAH purushhottamasya

karau na kasmAnmukulIkurudhve |
kriyAjushhAM ko bhavatAM prayAsaH
phalaM hi yattatpadamachyutasya || 85 ||

##

Hey humans, why do you cause your hands to become
impaired by not using them in favor of Purushottama?
Why are your efforts towards efforts that can win
fruition only at the feet of Achyuta?

Therefore, it is the case that all endeavors meet with fruition only by His will and desire, and not otherwise, and hence, it is wrong to imagine that one can obtain better results by not worshipping Him. Actions performed without obtaining His grace are wasted and may as well be considered as wearing out one’s limbs and body, for the results of those actions lie with Him and no other.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may yet have the doubt that while it may be the case that one's physical endeavors do not yield any benefit except upon Krishna's will, this fact alone is still not enough to justify Krishna's worship, as there is nothing to say that devoting one's limbs to such worship is worthwhile. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

vishhNorvimAnaM yaH kuryAtsakR^idbhyaktyA pradaxiNam.h |
ashvamedhasahasrasya phalamApnoti mAnavaH || 86 ||

##

One who performs circumambulation to Vishnu's vehicle with devotion
even once—such a person obtains the fruit of thousands of
ashva-medha-s.

Therefore, it is not only the case that the use of one's limbs in other

endeavors is essentially fruitless, but it is also the case that to use them in Vishnu's service in specific modes of service such as pradaxiNA is far more rewarding. The fact that even a one-time pradaxiNA of even

Vishnu's vehicle, i.e., of His devotee who leads one to Him, is so

rewarding, is not without its significance.

At this, one may ask why the subject should suddenly become Vishnu's

vehicle rather than Vishnu directly; the switch is baffling and not justified by context. To answer this, it is said:

##

pradaxiNaM tu yaH kuryAddhariM bhaktyA samanvitaH |
haMsayuktavimAnena vishhNulokaM sa gachchhati || 87 ||

##

One who performs pradaxiNA of Hari also with devotion; in a
vehicle that is like a swan, (s)he goes to Vishnu's abode.

Therefore, the connection is that worshipping Sri Hari with devotion, and of His devotees as conveyances to Him, will see oneself conveyed to a state of eternal joy.

At this, one may wonder how it can be that such contrary advice can

possibly be digested; in the world, it is far more common to find people putting their faith in pilgrimages and observances, and not in pradaxiNA and such of Krishna. The earlier answers that were given to similar objections rest on the assumption that Krishna's worship is carried out with exceptional devotion and knowledge, and cannot be applied in a case such as oneself where such are absent. To answer this, it is said:

##

tIrthakoTisahasrANi vratakoTishatAni cha |
nArAyaNapraNAmasya kalAM nArhanti shhoDashIm.h || 88 ||

##

A thousand crore pilgrimages, and a hundred crore vrata-s;
do not under any circumstances add up to even a sixteenth part
of a salutation to Narayana.

Therefore, even though it is granted that one's knowledge and devotion are far from adequate, and thus one's service of Krishna is bound to be far from ideal, it still is the case that one would do far better to devote one's limbs and such in Krishna's service than in any other kind of fruitive endeavor.

At this, one may wonder exactly how such 'praNAma' of Narayana is to be carried out; one is never sure. In fact, even though one has heard of 'sAshhTAN^ga'-namaskAra, etc., one is not even sure what that is—what the eight limbs/parts involved are! To answer this, the next verse says:

##

urasA shirasA dR^ishhT.hyA manasA vachasA tathA |
padbhyAM karAbhyAM jAnubhyAM praNAmo.ashhTAN^ga IritaH || 89 ||

##

With (i) the chest, (ii) the head, (iii) the eyes/vision, (iv) the

mind, and (v) the speech; and also (vi) the feet, (vii) the hands, and (viii) the knees—such a praNAma is known as ‘sAshhTAN^ga’.

Therefore, a ‘sAshhTAN^ga-praNAma’ is one that utilizes these parts of the body in favor of Sri Hari, over all other uses and diversions, and such a salutation is to be favored by one, as indicated earlier.

At this, one may have doubts about the feasibility of the worship

suggested, since it is generally exceptionally difficult for one to rein in one’s mind and speech in His service; even other body parts like the knees may not be strong or supple enough for one to devote them as suggested. So what to do? The next verse answers as follows:

##

shATh.hyenApi namaskAraM kurvataH shArN^gapANaye |
shatajanmArjitaM pApaM nashyatyeva na saMshayaH || 90 ||

##

Even if a namaskAra of Sri Hari be carried out for fraud;

it certainly destroys the sins of a hundred lifetimes, in this there is no doubt.

As such, even given one's uncooperative mind and inept body parts, one is still well-advised to perform namaskAra of Krishna to the extent possible rather than pursue any other ends.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may wonder that even given all the claimed advantages to the worship of Krishna, just the absence of any motivation on one's part to excel would prevent one from acting as advised; there is a significant tendency on one's part to procrastinate and find excuses, and it is unlikely that one can shed one's lethargy and perform namaskAra regularly. The next verse takes up the issue as follows:

##

saMsArArNavamagnAnAM narANAM pApakarmaNAm.h |
nAnyoddhartA jagannAthaM muktvA nArAyaNaM param.h || 91 ||

##

For humans who are immersed in the ocean of samsAra and are
suffering the sins of their misdeeds; there is no other
redeemer than Jagannatha, the Supreme Narayana who gives mukti.

As such, it is as well for one to take notice of the fact and worship Krishna now; if not now, one will have to eventually, but the delay is insufferable and hence inadvisable.

At this, one may object that performing namaskAra, &c., is dirty work; one may get one's hands and feet soiled, and one is disinclined to be anything but spotlessly clean at all times. Therefore, where's the question? The next verse answers as follows:

##

reNukuNThitagAtrasya kaNA yAvanti bhArata |
tAvadvarshhasahasrANi vishhNuloke mahIyate || 92 ||

##

For one covered in dust, as (innumerable) particles adhere, O Bharata;
in like fashion, for that many thousands of years, [a worshipper of Vishnu] resides in Vishnu's abode.

It is unlikely that while performing namaskAra one would become bathed in dirt from head to toe; but even if one were to be, it still would make perfect sense, because the benefit is immeasurably greater than the cost. Hence the advice.

At this, one may wonder if the worship of Krishna is admittedly

unclean work; the worship of others perhaps is not. Such worship of others is perhaps cleaner to perform, and cleansing of oneself, as well? To answer this, it is said:

##

pAvanaM vishhNunaivedyaM subhojyamR^ishhibhiH smR^itam.h |
anyadevasya naivedyaM bhuktvA chAndrAyaNaM charet.h || 93 ||

##

The 'naivedya' of Vishnu is purifying, and has been stated by the sages to be excellent to eat; if the 'naivedya' of other deities is consumed, then perform the 'chAndrAyaNa' (as atonement).

Therefore, it incorrect to hold that the worship of Vishnu is unclean

and non-cleansing; partaking of the offering which has been made to Vishnu is indeed pious, and should one happen to consume an offering made to another deity, one must undertake the extremely difficult 'chAndrAyaNa' observance to atone for the wrong. Hence it is that even in temples of other deities, 'naivedya' is primarily offered to Vishnu only, by those who know, and the deities are regarded as one's superiors who help one perform Vishnu's worship. Any worship of, and offering to, other deities in and of themselves is strictly forbidden, and partaking of such offering would need one to encounter great

difficulties later on in order to expurgate the sin.

At this, one may wonder what is to be the attitude in respect of

naivedya of Vishnu which has been performed by another; even granting that one's own worship and offering are worthwhile, perhaps it is ill-advised to partake of the offering made by another? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

koT.hyaindavasahasraistu mAsoposhhaNakoTibhiH |
tatphalaM prApyate puMbhirvishhNornaivedyabhaxaNAt.h || 94 ||

##

A thousand crore chAndrAyaNa-s, and a crore of observances of month-long fasts; such a result is obtained by one on account of consumption of Vishnu's 'naivedya'.

(*) 'aindava' in the verse is a synonym of 'chAndrAyaNa'.

Therefore, the qualities of superiority that have been stated for

Vishnu's 'naivedya' apply across the board, and are not due to special circumstances and such.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to question whether only the partaking of Vishnu's 'naivedya', which itself is not easy to prepare or come by, can give such benefits as claimed. For those who may be unable to offer 'naivedya' or receive it, what is the use? The next two verses answer as follows:

##

trirAtraphaladA nadyo yAH kAshchidasamudragAH |
samudragAstu paxasya mAsasya saritAMpatiH || 95 ||

shhaN.hmAsaphaladA godA vatsarasya tu jAhnavI |
vishhNupAdodakasyaite kalAM nArhanti shhoDashIm.h || 96 ||

##

Those rivers which do not enter any sea, give a benefit equal to that received by a sacrifice lasting three days; those that do enter a sea give a benefit equalling [that of a sacrifice lasting] a fortnight, and the sea itself, that equalling a month.

The river Godavari gives a benefit equalling a six-month sacrifice, while the Ganga gives one equalling that of a year—all of these are not even a sixteenth of the water which has been used to wash Vishnu's feet.

(Note: the references to rivers, etc., are actually references to their presiding deities, as the insentient water itself cannot bestow any boons upon anybody.)

The deities of various rivers, etc., give the seeker benefits in

proportion to their own worths; however, the lot of them are unable to match up to Vishnu, and it is therefore not plausible to expect that they can match up to the 'tIrtha' obtained by Vishnu's worship.

At that, one may ask if Vishnu's 'pAdodaka' is of greater efficacy only with respect to various rivers, etc., but not with respect to other places of pilgrimage? A related doubt is, of course why it should be that Vishnu's 'pAdodaka' is necessarily superior even to the rivers, which are renowned for removing seekers' sins, etc. To answer these questions, the next verse says:

##

gaN^gAprayAgagayapushhkaranaimishAni
saMsevitAni bahushaH kurujAN^galAni |
kAlena tIrthasalilAni punanti pApam.h
pAdodakaM bhagavataH prapunAti sadyaH || 97 ||

##

Upon much serving with devotion of [the deities of] the Ganga, Prayaga, Gaya, Pushkara, Naimisharanya, and Kurukshetra, after some time they remove one's sins; however, the 'pAdodaka' of the Lord does this immediately.

Therefore, what these pilgrimages can do after a significant lapse of

time, the tIrtha of Krishna does immediately, which is a concrete reason for saying that the former are not even a sixteenth of the latter. It is also seen that even pilgrimages other than rivers are less worthy than the pAdodaka of Vishnu, which thus is not superior only with respect to rivers.

At this, one may wonder if there perhaps is some pilgrimage spot or deity other than those named, which is able to match up to, or exceed, Vishnu's pAdodaka. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yAni kAni cha tIrthAni brahmANDAntaH sthitAni vai |
vishhNupAdodakasyaite kalAM nArhanti shhoDashIm.h || 98 ||

##

Wherever pilgrimage spots may be, even if they be located at the ends of the universe; they are not, under any circumstance, even a sixteenth of the pAdodaka of Vishnu.

Therefore, the stated restrictions hold in respect of all possible known and unknown pilgrimages, &c., and one is thus well-advised to regard Vishnu's pAdodaka as being superior to all of them.

At this, one may wonder exactly what one is supposed to do with Vishnu's pAdodaka to obtain the benefits said to derive from it. At least in the case of the rivers, etc., that was clear: one has to take a ritual bath, etc.—but here it is not. To answer this, it is said:

##

> snAnapAdodakaM vishhNoH piban.h shirasi dhArayan.h |
> sarvapApavinirmukto vaishhNavIM siddhimApnuyAt.h || 99 ||

##

> That which has been used to wash down Vishnu's icon, or his feet, is to be drunk, and placed upon one's head (respectively); one who does this is freed of all sins, and obtains the Vaishnava-siddhi.

At this, one may ask if only the pAdodaka of Vishnu has such special properties claimed—for instance, perhaps the 'dhUpa' of another deity is superior, however? To answer this, the next two verses say:

##

yathA pAdodakaM puNyaM nirmAlyaM chAnulepanam.h |
naivedyaM dhUpasheshhashcha ArArtishcha tathA hareH || 100 ||

tulasyAstu rajojushhTaM naivedyasya cha bhaxaNam.h |
nirmAlyaM shirasA dhAryaM mahApAtakanAshanam.h || 101 ||

##

Just as the pAdodaka is purifying, so also are the 'nirmAlya', the garments/sandalwood-paste which has been offered to the Deity, the 'naivedya', the 'dhUpa', the 'sheshha' ("remainder" = the 'aN^gAra'), and the 'Arati'—which have been offered to Hari.

The 'naivedya' is to be partaken of along with a stalk of 'tuLasI'; the 'nirmAlya' to be placed upon one's head, to remove even the gravest of sins.

Therefore, all the products of worship of Sri Krishna are immeasurably superior, and the pAdodaka is only an example that illustrates the general rule. The 'nirmAlya' is that which is placed upon one's head (as against the 'tIrtha' which is sipped), and removes the effects of even the most heinous offenses.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may wonder if the properties of nirmAlya, etc., which have been stated, apply only in case of some special worship of Krishna that one is incapable of—if that is so, then

one is better off looking at alternatives. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

bhaktyA vA yadi vA.abhaktyA chakrAN^kitashilAM prati |
darshanaM sparshanaM vA.api sarvapApapraNAshanam.h || 102 ||

##

Whether it be with devotion, or even without devotion, even the mere sighting or contact of the ‘chakrAN^kita’ and the (shAlagrAma-)shilA destroys all sins.

Therefore, since even the shAlagrAma, etc., are of such potency, there need be no doubt that one’s worship cannot be fruitful given one’s obvious lack of qualifications.

At this, one may wonder how it could possibly be that inert stones could give one such a result as claimed. It is in any event not possible for one to develop any sensible devotion towards a stone, and even if one did and benefited as has been suggested, that itself would be a conflict with whatever has been stated earlier as the greatness of Krishna’s worship. To answer these, the next verse states:

##

shAlagrAmodbhavo devo devo dvArAvatIbhavaH |
ubhayoH saN^gamo yatra tatra muktirnasaMshayaH || 103 ||

##

The Deity is present in the shAlagrAma, and the Deity is also
present in the [chakrAN^kita from] Dvaravati; where both [devotion
and handling/sighting of these] are present, there mukti occurs,
in this there is no doubt.

Therefore, the qualities stated earlier are in respect of Vishnu's icons, not just any inert stones, and the benefits only occur because of Vishnu, and not because of any potency of the inert matter itself. The devotion spoken of is with respect to the Deity, not the icon. Whereas the previous verse makes clear that even the sighting and handling of the shAlagrAma/chakrAN^kita without understanding their true significance is beneficial, doing the same in the proper fashion with the correct understanding that the Lord is present in them, is a guarantor of mukti.

At this, one may well ask how that is to matter to someone who is located in a place which is not at all conducive to spiritual progress. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

mlechchhadeshe.ashuchau vA.api chakrAN^ko yatra tishhThati |
yojanAni tathA trINi mama xetraM vasundhare || 104 ||

(varAha purANa)

##

Even if it be in a mlechchha or a filthy land, where the
'chakrAN^ka' resides; there for a distance of three yojana-s, is
My xetra, O Vasundhara.

In this verse, the Lord Varaha tells Bhudevi that the power of the

'chakrAN^kita' is such that its mere presence renders the area around it
as sanctified as the Lord's own xetra.

At this, it is but natural to ask—what if there is more than a mere

presence of the 'chakrAN^kita' in such conditions? The next verse answers
as follows:

##

shAlagrAmodbhavaM devaM shailaM chakrAN^kamaNDitam.h |
yatrApi nIyate tatra vAraNasyAH shatAdhikam.h || 105 ||

##

The Deity who is present in the shAlagrAma, and also in the chakrA^ka, wherever He be worshipped, that place is as hundreds of times greater than Varanasi.

While even the mere presence of a chakrAN^ka can sanctify the area around it, should the same be worshipped with exact understanding in any location whatsoever, said location is rendered far more sanctified to the worshipper than even a 'xetra' is to the ignoramus.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is liable to object that it is not proper to say that wherever Krishna is worshipped with devotion as residing in the shAlagrAma, the location is sanctified for the worshipper to a greater extent than even a xetra is to someone else. For then, people may falsely conclude that there is nothing to any xetra at all, thus causing a loss of spirituality in society. The xetra-s have a hallowed history, and have even been described as places for mukti; any carelessly applied superlatives that denounce them would thus be inaccurate as well. To answer these, the next verse says:

##

hariNA muktidAnIha muktisthAnAnisarvashaH |
sarvasya sarvabhAveshhu tasya taiH kiM prayojanam.h || 106 ||

##

Hari alone is the giver of mukti, in all these places which are said to be places for mukti; [He is responsible for] all qualities of all, so what use is there from them?

As it is the case that even in the xetra-s, etc., which are said to be

givers of mukti, only Hari who is resident there is the actual giver, and since He in fact is responsible for all potency that exists anywhere, what is the purpose in accepting the usefulness of the xetra-s independently of Hari? It must be accepted that even when one is looking for some purpose to be served by pilgrimage, only Krishna is ultimately the one who gives fulfillment, and the pilgrimage is of no use unless He does. As such, one must apply to Him directly, rather than imagine that one is seeking independent recourse.

At that, one may well wonder how sensible such advice is. It is well

known in the world that people seek pilgrimages and such for limited purposes such as wealth and advancement, and to remove limited distress like disease. One really does not have the time or the focus necessary to carry out spiritual actions that are not inspired by immediate ends. Therefore, while the worship of Sri Krishna may be suitable for great persons who do not have such desires in mind, pilgrimages and such are perhaps better suited to those such as oneself who do have them in mind. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

hariryAti hariryAti dasyuvyAjena yo vadet.h |
so.api tadgatimApnoti gatiM sukR^itino yathA || 107 ||

##

“Hari is there; Hari is there”—one who says this while in pursuit of a thief, even he obtains the same end, as is obtained by those of pious deeds.

One’s thinking of Krishna may be caused by severe duress, and the need to keep one’s hopes up when faced with uncertainty over limited ends such as the desire to recover stolen property. However, even in such a case, although one does not have the maturity of wisdom and the steadiness of understanding that is desirable, one’s deficient worship is still well advised and is not to be rejected, and thinking that pilgrimages, etc., are more suitable under such conditions is incorrect.

At this, one may ask: if one is faced with distress and decides to worship another deity in preference to Krishna, then what’s wrong? Surely it is possible that other deities will relieve one’s distress as well? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

vAsudevaM parityajya yo.anyaM daivamupAsate |
taktyvA.amR^itaM sa mUDhAtmA bhuN^kte hAlAhalaM vishham.h || 108 ||

##

One who, having given up Vasudeva, worships another deity; [it is as though] having given up 'amR^ita', the stupid one consumes the 'hAlAhala' poison instead.

Therefore, it is incorrect to prefer another deity over Krishna and

neglect to worship the latter, whatever may be the cause of the preference. Such a choice is fit only for those of unsound judgement, and one would be as wrong in making it as is someone who prefers to consume the most dreadful poison known rather than the nectar of immortality.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask how one is expected to accept the sectarian conclusion that only Vasudeva's worship is justified and anyone worshipping another is a fool. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

tyaktvA.amR^itaM yathA kashchidanyapAnaM pibennaraH |
tathA hariM parityajya chAnyaM daivamupAsate || 109 ||

##

As though, having given up 'amR^ita', a human drinks something else;

so also is the case with one who gives up Hari and worships another deity.

The worship of Hari is the only means to liberation, and no worship of any other deity could possible give that result (verses 26 to 34); as such, one who worships another in preference to Hari is as one who, having forfeited his chance at the nectar of immortality, prefers to consume something else in its stead.

At that, one may say that while it may be true that Krishna is unique in being the only giver of mukti, it still could be possible to worship another if one’s goal is not mukti, but is heaven, etc. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yathA gaN^godakaM tyaktvA pibetkUpodakaM naraH |
tathA hariM parityajya chAnyaM daivamupAsate || 110 ||

##

As though, having given up the water of the Ganga, a human drinks the water of a well; so also is the case with one who gives up Hari and worships another deity.

Even if one’s objective is merely transient joy in the afterworld, it

still is far better to worship Krishna than any other deity, for it is only by His worship that one is spared the ordeals that are otherwise not avoided (verses 41, 42). As such, it is not appropriate even for one seeking an extra-sensory end other than mukti, to worship anyone but

Krishna, just as one seeking the joys of heaven is better advised to

prefer the water of the Ganga over the water of a common well.

At that, one may wonder if it is proper to use the strong language of verse 108, even given these explanations; for one’s objective may be neither liberation nor heaven, but merely some immediate gain in one’s life. Surely it is not incorrect to worship another deity then? The next verse answers as follows:

##

gAM cha tyaktvA vimUDhAtmA gardabhaM vandate yathA |
tathA hariM parityajya chAnyaM daivamupAsate || 111 ||

##

As though, having given up a cow, a fool worships a ***;
so also is the case with one who gives up Hari and worships
another deity.

Just as there is no comparison between a cow and a *** in terms of

beauty, sanctity, ability to nourish, etc., so also, there is no comparison between Krishna and any other deity even in being able to provide succor in the world (verse 55, 56). Therefore, even from the very limited perspective of ends desired in one's own lifetime, it only makes sense for one to worship Krishna and no other.

At that, one may still object that even granting the truth of all that has been said, one still may worship another deity simply because one has a fondness for that deity; just as a person is certainly entitled to the idiosyncratic—if irrational—preference for a particular *** over a cow, it is perfectly plausible that one would prefer to worship a certain deity other than Krishna simply because one felt a closeness, fondness, or kinship towards that deity, even if the deity cannot match up to Krishna. To answer that argument, it is said:

##

svamAtaraM parityajya shvapAkIM vandate yathA |
tathA hariM parityajya chAnyaM daivamupAsate || 112 ||

##

As though, having given up one's own mother, one praises she who cooks dog meat; so also is the case with one who gives up Hari and worships another deity.

For not only is Krishna a better provider of all kinds of ends, He is also very dear to us by the very nature of things, and is as our close parent, in fact. One's relationship with Krishna is eternal and is one of constant attachment and dependence, just as a child is dependent upon a mother for her care. As such, the worship of Krishna, our eternal support, is at least as sensible as the honoring of one's parent, and the worship of another of far lesser qualities is as reprehensible as a false attachment to a person obviously lacking in virtue.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say: well, that's all

very nice, but you see, I have this really important something to accomplish, and I'm already five minutes late. Perhaps another time. For that, it is said:

##

yAvatsvasthamidaM piNDaM nirujaM karaNAnvitam.h |
tAvatkurushhvA.atmahitaM pashchAttApena tapyase || 113 ||

##

As long as the body is healthy, free of aches, and equipped with functional senses; do what is good for you, else you will suffer and repent.

It is necessary for one to devote the body and the senses to the service of Krishna while one still has them in working order; finding excuses and generally procrastinating or incorrectly prioritizing one's life would not be a good idea.

At that, one may say: well, look at me now; I'm still only in my fifties

and look and feel years younger, so there's still a lot of time left. I'll start worshipping Krishna when I retire in ten years or so, but until I do, I have lots of important things to worry about. To answer this, it is said:

##

> yAvatsvAsthyaM sharIreshhu karaNeshhu cha pATavam.h |
> tAvadarchaya govindamAyushhyaM sArthakaM kuru || 114 ||

##

> As long as the body is healthy and the senses are keen;
> worship for so long Govinda, and make your life worthwhile.

It being the case that only the worship of Krishna makes one's life

fulfilling (verse 13), other endeavors being of no consequence, it is proper to ask why one should waste a majority of the good years of one's life doing useless things, in the hope that one will be able to make up

for the time wasted. One would do far better to devote oneself to Krishna right from the start, for that is surely the superior method even given worldly experience which shows the ill-effects of procrastination.

At that, one may say: notice however that it has been claimed (verse 12, etc.) that even worshipping Krishna once is worthwhile; so, it is quite proper that my once come when I'm toothless and eighty. Until then, I need to do other things. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

smartavyaM tu hR^ishhIkeshho hR^ishhIkeshhu dR^iDheshhu cha |
adR^iDheshhu hR^ishhIkeshhu hR^ishhIkeshhaM smaranti ke || 115 ||

##

Hrishikesha (the Lord of the senses) is to be remembered when the senses are yet firm; for when the senses become infirm, who remembers Hrshikesha?

It is only when the senses are all in good working order, that one can reasonably plan and carry out one's plans, including for Krishna's worship. Planning such worship for a future date when one may well not have one's faculties in proper working order, is not at all sensible.

At that, one may think that asking one to worship Krishna while all the pleasures of the world await one's attention, is not realistic. For even given the alleged benefits of His worship, other pursuits are certainly

more pleasing to oneself, and there is no similar benefit that one can perceive in such worship. As such, there is no motivation for one to give up worldly pleasures in favor of worship. To answer this, it is said:

##

yAvachchintayate janturvishhayAn.h vishhasannibhAn.h |
tAvachchetsmarate vishhNuM ko na muchyeta bandhanAt.h || 116 ||

##

As long as the creature thinks of sense-objects, which are as poison;
if for like duration Vishnu were to be remembered, then which bondage
could one possibly not be freed from?

It is seen that even though certain pleasures are known to be unhealthy, the mind still dwells upon them at length, and the individual is even liable to pursue pleasures which are known to be extremely injurious; many a man has fallen from positions of success or fame owing to some lapse of judgement, and the desire for gratification; if a person therefore decides not for such "poisonous" gratification but for momentary thoughts of Krishna which are harmless at worst, what is the loss? There is none, and in fact, there is no difficulty that such a person could possibly fail to overcome. Therefore, there is no sense in saying that sensory pursuits are more pleasing than Krishna's worship.

At that, one may object that the pleasure or otherwise of any endeavor is necessarily a function of one's interest in it. Given that one is very

interested in worldly affairs and situations, and not at all interested in

Krishna, it is but natural that one finds the former pleasing and the

latter tedious, and nothing that has been said so far changes this. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yAvatpralapate janturlokavArtAdibhiH sadA |
tAvachchetsmarate vishhNuM ko na muchyeta bandhanAt.h || 117 ||

##

As long as the creature babbles constantly about worldly gossip, etc.;
if for like duration Vishnu were to be remembered, then which bondage
could one possibly not be freed from?

If one is interested in engaging in worldly gossip which brings one no benefit to speak of, then why would one object to engaging in thinking about Krishna, when such thinking brings untold benefits? After all, one's interest in things is predicated upon the use one has for them, and not the reverse—as such, there is no sensible consideration which would allow one to remain interested in worldly gossip while being uninterested in Krishna.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask exactly what it

is that one is supposed to work at, which is being advised previously as being necessary of attempt when one is still of sound body. The next verses answer:

##

j~nAtvA viprAstithiM samyag.h daivaj~naiH samudIritAm.h |
kartavya upavAsastu anyathA narakaM vrajet.h || 118 ||

##

Knowing the [ekAdashI] date correctly, it has been stated by those of divine knowledge; fasting is to be observed, otherwise naraka would be obtained.

Therefore, the correct observance of ekAdashI-s is stated to be the

first order of business for anyone wishing to worship Krishna.

At that, one would ask, how is the date to be determined correctly?

The next verse answers:

##

xaye vA.apyathavA vR^iddhau samprApte vA dinaxaye |
uposhhyA dvAdashI puNyA pUrvaviddhAM parityajet.h || 119 ||

##

When there is either gain or loss of time [on ekAdashI itself], or when multiple dates occur together; or when fasting is undertaken on the dvAdashI, one's merit is given up as before.

Therefore, fasting is to be avoided on incomplete ekAdashI days, on

dvAdashI, and on days when ekAdashI and other dates occur together.

At that, one may object that fasting has to be the same on any given day, and hence, there need be no spurious concern about the dates. What's wrong if one observes a fast on dvAdashI, for instance? The next verse answers:

##

pUrvaviddhAM prakurvANo naro dharmAnnikR^intati |
santatestu vinAshAya saMpado haraNAya cha || 120 ||

##

The merit of a human who carries out the observance is reduced (should the rules be flouted); his progeny is destroyed, and his wealth is looted as well.

Given such a stern stricture, one would do as well to mind what one is told, and not act by whim.

However, one may ask, what's so wrong if one fasts on a day that has both dashamI and ekAdashI in it? After all, the ekAdashI is still good. The next verse answers:

##

kalAvedhe tu viprendra dashamyaikAdashI yadi |
surAyA bindunA spR^ishhTaM gaN^gAMbha iva santyajet.h || 121 ||

##

If there is even the slightest contact of dashamI with ekAdashi; then as with Ganga-water that has a drop of liquor mixed in it, such is to be rejected.

Therefore, the "pollution" of contact with another date is so great

that even a small amount of it would render the observance worthless.

At that, one may object that the example above is improper; water and liquor are miscible so that once a drop of liquor had been added to water, one would not know where the water stopped and the liquor began, and would thus have to reject the whole of it. However, dates are not miscible in like fashion, and one can accurately tell, to the minute, when dashamI stops and ekAdashI begins; hence one could conduct a proper observance of ekAdashI even when such a mixture occurs. For that, it is said:

##

shvadR^itau paJNchagavyaM cha dashamyA dUshhitAM tyajet.h |
ekAdashIM dvijashreshhThAH paxayorubhayorapi || 122 ||

##

Just as paJNcha-gavya which has had contact with a dog is rejected; so also [such] an ekAdashI is rejected be the best among the twice-born, in both halves of the month.

Even though one knows where the paJNcha-gavya stops and the dog begins, one is not inclined to use the paJNcha-gavya which has seen contact with a dog, and likewise here.

At that, one may ask, what if some sacred observance happens to land on ekAdashI day, or if one has to observe shrAddha, etc., then? One may not be able to fast then. For that, the next verse says:

##

tasmAdviprA na viddhA hi kartavyaikAdashI kvachit.h |
viddhA hanti purApuNyaM shrAddhaM cha vR^ishhalIpatiH || 123 ||

##

Therefore, no observances (like sacrifices, etc.) are undertaken
by the sages on ekAdashI under any circumstances; if such are, one's
puNya, and shrAddha are destroyed by Indra.

Therefore, ekAdashI is yet of paramount importance in relation to
other sacred acts and desired observances, so that when the two clash,
the latter are to be rescheduled suitably.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask what could
justify the importance given to the observance of ekAdashI-s over
other rituals that may be performed on that day. To answer this, the
next verse says:

##

japtaM dattaM hutaM snAtaM tathA pUjA kR^itA hareH |

tatsarvaM vilayaM yAti tamaH sUryodaye yathA || 124 ||

##

The performance of japa, dAna, homa, snAna, and the pUjA of Hari;
all dissolve as darkness with sunrise [if the ekAdashI is given up].

Therefore, it is not merely a question of ekAdashI being more fulfilling than other rituals, but it is also the fact that other rituals become without value if the ekAdashI is rejected.

At that, one may say: it has been indicated earlier in verses 116, et seq., that fasting is not to be undertaken under certain conditions; therefore, under those conditions, perhaps one gets away scot-free without having to observe the ekAdashI restriction, and may carry out other rituals in preference? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ekAdashyA yadA brahman.h dinaxayatithirbhavet.h |
uposhhyA dvAdashI puNyA trayodashyAM tu pAraNam.h || 125 ||

##

If on the day of ekAdashI a dina-xaya-tithi (incomplete date) occurs;
then fasting is to be undertaken on dvAdashI, and pAraNe on the trayodashI.

Therefore, such a situation merely re-schedules the observance, and does not excuse it.

At that, one may say: reference has been made here and previously to incomplete dates—exactly how are those to be reckoned? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

pratipratprabhR^itayaH sarvA udayAdudayAdraveH |
saMpUrNA iti vij~neyA harivAsaravarjitAH || 126 ||

##

If from one sunrise to the next, all of it is one date;
such a 'hari-vAsara' ("Vishnu's day"—ekAdashI) is to
be known as complete, and flawless.

At that, one may say: but what if there is some conflict of dates at

the very time of sunrise, but none later? The next verse answers:

##

aruNodayakAle tu dashamI yadi dR^ishyate |

pApamUlaM tadA j~neyamekAdashyupavAsinAm.h || 127 ||

##

If at the time of dawn (before sunrise), dashamI is seen;
the undertaking of fast on such an ekAdashI is to be known as
the cause of sin.

Therefore, even the occurrence of dashamI shortly prior to sunrise

would invalidate the ekAdashI.

At that, one may ask if such a restriction makes any sense, since the

dates are reckoned from sunrise to sunrise; besides, perhaps the merit gained outweighs the sin? The next verse answers as follows:

##

aruNodayakAle tu dashamI yadi dR^ishyate |
natatraikAdashI kAryA dharmakAmArthanAshinI || 128 ||

##

If at the time of dawn dashamI is seen; then ekAdashI is not to be

undertaken, for such is a destroyer of righteousness, happiness, and wealth.

Therefore, vide the verses 121, etc., even a slight contact with

dashamI means that the ekAdashI fast is not to be undertaken on such a day.

At this, one may ask: exactly how is the time of ‘aruNodaya’ or dawn to be reckoned? The next verse answers:

##

chatusro ghaTikAH prAtararuNodaya uchyate |
yatInAM snAnakAlo.ayaM gaN^gAbhaH sadR^ishaM smR^itaH || 129 ||

##

A period of four ghaTikA-s (‘ghaTikA’ = 24 minutes) in the morning (before sunrise) is stated to be the time of aruNodaya; this is the time for sa.nnyAsI-s to take bath, and is purifying as is the water of the Ganga—so has been stated.

Therefore, the dawn is reckoned to be a period in the morning of 96 minutes prior to sunrise, and this is when contact with dashamI, if found, would invalidate the ekAdashI
At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask if there are any

other conditions or limitations that obtain in consideration of the reckoning of an ekAdashI. To answer this, it is said:

##

udayAtprAg.hyadA viprA muhUrtadvayasaMyutA |
saMpUrNaikAdashI nAma tatraivopavased.hgR^ihI || 130 ||

##

If [an ekAdashI] extends from a duration of two muhUrta-s (twice 48 minutes, or 96 minutes, as before) in the morning (i.e., before sunrise; then it is called a 'saMpUrNa-ekAdashI' ("total" ekAdashI) and only on such a one must a householder fast.

If an ekAdashI is unobstructed for a period of 96 minutes before sunrise, then one is able to decide that it is indeed worth observing; there is no other condition.

At this, one may ask, what is an ekAdashI called if it is not

'saMpUrNa', and what is one to do about it? The next verse answers as follows:

##

udayAt.hprAk.h trighaTikAvyApinyekAdashI yadi |
saN^kIrNaikAdashI nAma varjyA dharmArthakAN^xibhiH || 131 ||

##

If the ekAdashI extends from a duration of three ghaTikA-s (72 minutes) in the morning, then it is called a ‘saN^kIrNa’-ekAdashI (“impure” ekAdashI), and is to be given up by those desiring righteousness and wealth.

What is one to do in such an instance? The next verse answers:

##

putrarAjya vivR^id.hdhyarthaM dvAdashyAmupavAsanam.h |
tatra kratushataM puNyaM trayodashyAM tu pAraNam.h || 132 ||

##

In order to attain sons and kingdoms, fasting is to be undertaken [in such an instance] on dvAdashI; for merit equal to hundreds of virtuous acts, the pAraNe is to be conducted [in addition to the fasting] on trayodashI.

As indicated in verse 125 about multiple dates occurring on the same day, in such an instance, fasting is to be undertaken on dvAdashI instead of on ekAdashI.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask: what about the case where an ekAdashI has contact with dashamI to the extent of two ghaTikA-s before sunrise? The wording of verse 131 didn't make this quite clear.
To answer this, it is said:

##

udayAtprAg.h dvighaTikAvyApi nyekAdashI yadi |
sandigdhaikAdashI nAma na tatropavasedgR^ihI || 133 ||

If for a period of two ghaTikA-s before sunrise there is no ekAdashI; such is called a 'sandigdha' (confused) ekAdasHi, and on such a one, a fast is not to be undertaken by the householder.

At this, one may say, all these highfalutin rules about when to observe ekAdashI are over the top of one's head: one proposes instead to keep things simple and to observe the ekAdashI fast simply on the eleventh day of each fortnight, without wasting time on whether dashamI was present within a certain number of minutes of sunrise, etc. To answer this, it is said:

##

dashamIsheshhasaMyuktA gAndhAryA samuposhhitA |
tasyAH putrashataM nashhTaM tasmAt.h tAM parivarjayet.h || 134 ||

##

[An ekAdashI] with a fragment of dashaMi was fasted upon by Gandhari (the mother of the Kauravas); her hundred sons were destroyed thereby—therefore, give up such a one.

It is cautioned that the ills that can befall one on account of wilful

heedlessness in the matter of ekAdashI observance are not small, and in order to remove the possibility of great suffering, one must not ignore the rules which have been explained so far.

At that, one may say: however, it is observed often that different

documents publish different dates for ekAdashI; different scholars also disagree and give differing opinions on when ekAdashI is to be observed, etc. Such being the case, how can one be expected to correctly observe ekAdashI, and how, too is it fair to hold out threats against one, as above? To answer these, it is said:

##

bahvAgamavirodheshhu brAhmaNeshhu vivAdishhu |
uposhhyA dvAdashI puNyA paxayorubhayorapi || 135 ||

##

When there is a conflict between different almanacs, and when the
brAhmaNa-s disagree [on ekAdashI]; fast then on the pious dvAdashI,
in either fortnight (i.e., in the waxing or the waning of the moon).

Therefore, when there is conflict among various texts and when one is unable to decide when the correct ekAdashI is, one must fast instead on the dvAdashI day that follows.

At that, one may ask if such a compromise solution has any value at all.

Surely it is better to fast on someone's ekAdashI, rather than on
dvAdashI? To answer this, it is said:

##

uparAgasahasrANi vyatIpAtAyutAni cha |
amAlaxaM tu dvAdashyAH kalAM nArhanti shhoDashIm.h || 136 ||

##

Thousands of acts of renunciation, observances of the somavatI-pUrNimA (the full-moon day falling on a Monday) and the amAvasyA,
do not match up, under any circumstance, to a dvAdashI.

Therefore, one is not to suspect that one's observance of the vrata on the dvAdashI is fruitless or even that it is insufficiently fruitful.

At this, one may ask what restrictions similar to that of an ekAdashI, apply to the observance of a fast on a dvAdashI. To answer this, it is said:

##

shuddhA.api dvAdashI grAhyA parato dvAdashI yadi |
vishhaM tu dashamI j~neyA.amR^itaM chaikAdashItithiH |
vishhapradhAnA varjyA sA.amR^itA grAhyA pradhAnataH || 137 ||

##

If there is a mixed-dvAdashI, then the pure one (before or after)
is to be accepted; dashamI is to be known as poison, and the ekAdashI
date as amR^ita; that which is primarily poison is to be given up,,
and that which is primarily amR^ita is to be accepted.

Therefore, it is clarified that in case of a dvAdashI which is mixed with another date, the shuddha-dvAdashI is the one that is to be used for fasting. The importance of avoiding the dashamI in fasting is again emphasized, as it is the motivation for deciding to fast on dvAdashI instead.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask if the observance of a fast on an ekAdashI which has been tainted by dashamI could possibly be worthwhile even if it brings ruin in one's own lifetime as it did Gandhari—possibly it brings joy in the afterlife, which may count for more than the suffering in one's present lifetime? To answer this, it is said:

##

dvAdashyAM bhojanaM chaiva viddhAyAM haryaposhhaNam.h |
yaH kuryAnmandabuddhitvAnnirayaM so.adhigachchhati || 138 ||

##

Eating on dvAdashI after having fasted on a forbidden day;
whoever does this, on account of stupidity, (s)he goes to ***.

It is stated in no uncertain terms that there can be no benefit in the

afterlife either for one who fails to observe the restriction against fasting on forbidden days, and further, that it in fact is stupid to even think that there might be gain in the afterlife due to an observance which is stated to bring total ruin in one's own lifetime. No intelligent person could accept that action which is ruinous in one's lifetime will bring joy in one's afterlife, and one who accepts this can rightly be described as suffering because of stupidity.

At this, one may point to some statements in the dharma-shAstra-s or the like where observance of a fast on an ekAdashI tainted with dashamI is recommended. How is one to reconcile those with what is being said here? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

> yAni kAni cha vAkyAni viddhopAstiparANi tu |
> dhanadArchAparANi syurvaishhNavI na dashAyutA || 139 ||

##

> Whichever statements may exist in favor of such upavAsa on the proscribed day; they are in favor of those who worship deities who give money, for the day with dashamI is not vaishhNavI.

Therefore, as it may be seen that any such statements found are not stated to be in favor of Sri Hari, and are instead meant for acquiring wealth, etc., which may be ruled out given the preferability of worshipping Krishna instead, such an observance is not worthy of consideration.

At this, one may object that such prescriptions for dashamI-tainted

ekAdashI are found not just in some out-of-the-way dharma-shAstra, but even in purANa-s which are considered canonical literature. What would one make of those? To answer this, it is said:

##

athavA mohanArthAni mohinyA bhagavAn.h hariH |
arthitaH kArayAmAsa vyAsarUpo janArdanaH || 140 ||

##

Or else, these are meant for delusion, for Hari is the 'mohinI';
with such meanings, Janardana created these, in the form of Vyasa.

Even where such statements are found in compositions of Vyasa, they are meant for delusion only, and not otherwise. The power of the Lord to delude is well established in His forms such as 'mohinI', and as such, there need be no doubt that He is fully capable of causing delusion and false understanding.

At that, one may ask, why at all would the Lord wish to cause delusion in this matter? Why not simply be straightforward? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

dhanadArchAvivR^iddhyarthaM mahAvittalayasya cha |
asurANAM mohanArthaM pAshhaNDAnAM vivR^iddhaye |
AtmasvarUpAvij~napyai svalokAprAptaye tathA || 141 ||

##

> To increase the worship of wealth-bestowing deities, and to cause destruction of the greater wealth; in order to delude the demons, and to increase the numbers of the heretical; in order to prevent the knowledge of the Lord's true nature, and to see they that do not reach His abode.

In order to see that the undeserving do not attain Vishnu's abode, it is necessary that they be ignorant of His true nature; this in turn entails the condition that they be overcome by heretical tendencies that prevent right knowledge, which in turn requires them to be deluded; this requires that they lose intelligence and other superior gifts and be given to ***, etc.; and this, finally, requires that they obtain, and be ensnared by the lures of, material wealth—and this, finally, is the reason for the false instruction.

At that, one may say, even if all that is true, the ekAdashI is said to be a great purifier, and by giving it up due to the presence of dashamI, one loses out on the chance to get rid of one's sins that cause suffering. To answer this, it is said:

##

> evaM viddhAM parityajya dvAdashyAmupavAsane |
> koTijanmArjitaM pApamekayaiva vinashyati || 142 ||

##

And when the forbidden day is rejected, and fast is observed on dvAdashI; the collected sins of a crore lifetimes are destroyed all at once.

As such, the lingering suspicion that by forsaking ekAdashI one loses out in this matter, has no basis.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say that it is not easy for one to fast on ekAdashI, since no one in one's surroundings does it and it is very hard for one to go against the grain and undertake such an observance. Perhaps if one were more fortunate in circumstance, one could have done something of the kind, but as things stand, there is just no way. For that, the next two verses say:

##

(rudraH)

tataH koTiguNaM vA.api nishhiddhasyetarairjanaiH |
yadanAdikR^itaM pApaM tadUrdhvaM saN^karishhyati || 143 ||

tatsarvaM vilayaM yAti pareshhAmupavAsanAt.h |
na cha tasmAtpriyatamaH keshavasya mamApi vA || 144 ||

##

And even a crore times that (stated in the previous verse), when observance is forbidden by others; all the sins from the beginningless past, and whatever sins may yet be committed in future, are all destroyed when one causes others to fast as well; there is verily none that is dearer to Keshava, or to me (Shiva), than such a person.

Therefore, if perchance one is not in the happy situation of being among a group of devotees of Krishna who observe ekAdashI regularly, and in fact is located amongst people who ridicule such an idea, then the correct observance of the same, and causing another to undertake the correct observance of the same, destroys all of one’s sins from the beginningless past into the untold future, and Sri Rudra states that there is none dearer to Krishna or to him, than such a person.

At that one may ask what is to be done if the ekAdashI is not tainted with dashamI, but the dvAdashI that follows is not a “pure” date. Then one cannot observe pAraNe as required, which in turn means that one cannot fast at all on ekAdashI either (there being no means of breaking the fast later, it would be unwise to fast in the first place). To answer this, it is said:

##

ekAdashyA hyavedhe tu dvAdashIM na parityajet.h |
pAraNE maraNe chaiva tithistAtkAlikI smR^itA || 145 ||

##

When the ekAdashI is unbarred, do not reject the dvAdashI;
for pAraNe and for maraNa, the date is reckoned momentarily,
thus it is stated.

After the ekAdashI has been observed, the dvAdashI that follows is not to be rejected even if a mixed date; the pAraNe may be done on a mixed date, because the date for the same is to be reckoned as obtaining at the specific time when it is undertaken, and does not have to be the same for the whole day. Therefore, if it is dvAdashI at the specific time when the pAraNe is undertaken, it is enough. Else, one would have to say by similarity that a person who passes on during a "mixed" date cannot have died because the date of his death cannot be fixed—thus, the objection is absurd as it would, if granted, force one to classify certain dead persons as living.

At that, one may ask why it is that previous verses have spoken of the observance of ekAdashI by one who is a 'vipra', 'gR^ihI', et cetera—does that mean that if one is anything but a brahmin householder, one is excused from having to undertake the rather difficult fast? To answer this, it is said:

##

brahmachArI gR^ihastho vA vAnaprastho yatistathA |
brAhmaNaH xatriyo vaishyaH shUdro bhartR^imatI tathA || 146 ||

abhartR^ikA tathA.anye cha sUtavaidehikAdayaH |

ekAdashyAM na bhuJNjIta paxayorubhayorapi || 147 ||

##

Whether a brahmachArI, a gR^ihastha, a vAnaprastha, or a yati;
a brAhmaNa, a xatriya, a vaishya, a shUdra, or a bhartR^imati (woman whose husband is living); and also an abhartR^ikA (a widow), and others too such as sUta, vaidehikA, etc. (mixed varNa-s) -- do not
eat on ekAdashI, in both parts of the month.

Therefore, it is clarified that the statements which have been made

about the correct observance of ekAdashI apply across the board regardless of one's birth or station in life, and are not meant only for some. The single instances cited constitute the use of 'upalaxaNa'-s, or the manner of denoting a whole class by pointing to the prominent member of the class.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask what if one is not noticeably covered under the extensive listing therein; might it then be that one is excused from having to observe the ekAdashI? The next verse answers this as follows:

##

ekAdashyAM tu yo bhuN^kte mohenAvR^itachetasaH |
shuklAyAmatha kR^ishhNAyAM nirayaM yAti sa dhruvam.h || 148 ||

##

> One who eats on ekAdashI on account of an intellect clouded by delusion; be it the shukla- or the kR^ishhNa-paxa, (s)he goes to ***, this is certain.

Therefore, one is not to imagine under any circumstances that there is any loophole in the listing of verses 146-147 that one can make use of to consider oneself excused from the requirement, and any such sophistry that seeks to find a loophole is merely an exercise in delusion.

At that, one may ask what if one however decides that one will observe the ekAdashI of the waxing phase of the moon, but not the one of the waning phase (or vice versa); this would be easier since one then has to observe ekAdashI just once a month instead of once every fortnight. Perhaps those who are saints or great seekers can observe one every fortnight, but as a person of the world, one can make do with once a month. To deal with this thinking, the next verse says:

##

> vivechayati yo mohAchchhuklA kR^ishhNeti mohakR^it.h |
> ekAdashIM sa vai yAti nirayaM nAtra saMshayaH || 149 ||

##

One who makes a discrimination between the shukla- and kR^ishhNa-paxa ekAdashI-s, he too goes to ***, in this there is no doubt.

Therefore, there is not the least scope for any such false reasoning in respect of the ekAdashI observance.

At that, one may ask why it should be that both ekAdashI-s have like value and are not to be given up by the seeker; what could be so wrong if one decides that one values the shukla-paxa ekAdashI more than the other? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yathA gaurnaiva hantavyA shuklA kR^ishhNeti bhAminI |
ekAdashyAM na bhuJNjIta paxayorubhayorapi || 150 ||

##

Just as a cow is not to be killed, whether it be shukla (white) or kR^ishhNa (black), O Bhamini; one is not to eat on ekAdashI, in both paxa-s (shukla and kR^ishhNa). (*)

Therefore, just as a cow has its sanctity irrespective of its features, so also does the ekAdashI irrespective of which part of the month it occurs in.

At that, one may object that there are statements in the dharma-shAstra-s,

etc., which ask one to avoid fasting on the ekAdashI of the dark fortnight, etc.; the present teaching conflicts with them and is hence unacceptable. To deal with this objection, it is said:

##

yAni kAni cha vAkyAni kR^ishhNaikAdashivarjinI |
bharaNyAdinishhedhe.api tAni kAmyaphalArthinAm.h || 151 ||

##

Whichever statements there may be about rejecting the ekAdashI of the kR^ishhNa-paxa, or about proscriptions concerning [fasting on the ekAdashI when the constellation] bharaNI [is on the ascendant], etc., those are for seekers of pleasure.

Therefore, it is to be understood that any proscriptions there may be concerning any ekAdashI-s are not for those who are in the service of

Krishna, but are merely for those who only wish to obtain

***-satisfaction. As such, there need be no doubt in the minds of those who have understood the uniquely superior nature of Krishna's worship in comparison with sensual pursuits, about the worth of observing ekAdashI even against such proscriptions.

At that, one may ask why the previous verse makes the distinction between those seeking pleasure, and those seeking to worship Krishna. Does this mean that those who desire pleasure must not fast on the days when such

proscriptions as previously referred to exist, but only those who wish to serve Krishna may? If so, it may not be necessary for one to fast on certain ekAdashI-s, since after all is said and done, one is a creature of the world and is deeply interested in its offerings. To answer this, it is stated:

##

kAmino.api hi moxArthaM kuryurevopavAsanam.h |
prINanArthaM harernityaM na tu kAmavyapexayA || 152 ||

##

Even those who desire pleasure certainly must fast [on ekAdashI] for the sake of moxa only; in order to please Hari constantly, and not for obtaining sensual satisfaction.

It cannot be said that moxa is any less desirable than sensory

satisfaction, because it is eternal while the latter is not; it also cannot be said that working for moxa is only for those who are devoid of all base desires, since that would make moxa effectively unattainable. Therefore, even if one desires the pleasures of the world, it is not correct for one to reject the ekAdashI; one still must engage in the service of Hari constantly, and must fast as required of one, without letting one's desires get in the way.

The next verse presents the conclusion of the previous five as follows:

##

tasmAchchhuklAmatho kR^ishhNAM bharaNyAdiyutAmapi |
pratyavAyanishhedhArthamupavAseti nityashaH |
prINanArthaM hareshchApi vishhNulokasya chA.aptaye || 153 ||

##

Therefore, in the shukla- and the kR^ishhNa-paxa-s, and also in
the presence of bharaNI, etc.; in order to stop one's disappointments
one is to fast always [on ekAdashI]; also in order to please Hari,
and to obtain Vishnu's abode, as well.

As such, the decided conclusion is that there is no exception which could possibly rule out one's need to observe a fast on any ekAdashI, which one is to do as a form of service of Krishna, in order to obtain the merits described. The verse makes a distinction between stopping disappointments (pratyavAya-nishhedha) and otaining Vishnu's abode, to show that even those who are deeply interested in everyday life must fast without fail on ekAdashI, notwithstanding the fact that the otherworldly end of obtaining Vishnu's abode does not capture their interest to the same extent.

(*) The word 'bhAminI' (which can be used as a term of endearment applied to a woman by her mate) in the verse is an epithet applied to the person whom this verse was first given as instruction to, possibly Parvati (with the speaker being Rudra); however, without tracing the source, it is not possible to say for certain whom it refers to.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one is apt to say that while the merits of fasting on an unobstructed ekAdashI have been spoken of at length, the rules for the dvAdashI that follows have not. To address this, the following verse says:

##

kalA vA ghaTikA vA.api apare dvAdashI yadi |
dvAdasha dvAdashIrhanti pUrvedyuH pAraNe kR^ite || 154 ||

##

If a small part, even a ghaTikA (=24 minutes) [of the following day] is dvAdashI, then the merit of twelve dvAdashI-s is lost, if one performs pAraNe outside this time.

Therefore, the meaning of verse 145 is further reinforced by pointing out that it is important to break the fast at the proper time, and not just at any other.

At this, one may ask what one is to do if one is not fasting on ekAdashI subject to the proscriptions concerning fasting on a day when dashamI occludes. What is the correct procedure for dvAdashI then? The next verse answer as follows:

##

atiriktA dvAdashI chetsa tAM noposhhayedyadi |
dvAdasha dvAdashIrhanti dvAdashI chAtilaN^ghitA || 155 ||

##

If the dvAdashI is separate (unobstructed), and a fast is not observed on it; then the merit of twelve dvAdashI-s is lost, on account of having violated the rules for dvAdashI.

If one does not fast on the proper dvAdashI following an occluded

ekAdashI, then one loses the merit of twelve proper observances, for having broken the rules.

Still, one could say, that's something one can live with. One after all

does not have twelve proper observances of dvAdashI to speak of, and so, there isn't that much for one to lose. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

dvAdashIM shravaNopetAM yo noposhhyAtsumandadhIH |
paJNchasamvatsarakR^itaM puNyaM tasya vinashyati || 156 ||

##

For one of a dull mind, who does not fast on the shravaNa-dvAdashI;
his puNya earned over a period of five years is destroyed.

As such, there is no reason for one to be complacent about the dvAdashI observance either.

At this, one may say that given the oft-present confusion regarding the exact dates of ekAdashI and dvAdashI, the above statements are not useful. For according to the statement of verse 135, one is to fast on dvAdashI when there is conflict among almanacs or disagreement among scholars as to the ekAdashI date. However, according to what has been said subsequently in verse 150, it is not appropriate to eat on ekAdashI, and it further is not appropriate to have pAraNe on a date other than dvAdashI. As such, the advice is inconsistent and thus impractical, since one cannot be sure that one is fasting on the dvAdashI to follow and not on the ekAdashI that is in doubt; there is always the chance than one will fast on the wrong day and lose merit. To answer this, it is said:

##

ekAdashImuposhhyAtha dvAdashImapyuposhhayet.h |
na tatra vidhilopaH syudubhayordevatA hariH || 157 ||

##

Whether the fast be on ekAdashI, or whether the fast be on
dvAdashI; there is no lapse of procedure thereby, as the devatA
for both is Hari.

Therefore, if one decides to fast on a day which is considered ekAdashI by some and dvAdashI by others, there is no lapse on one's part regardless of who is right, because the Deity of either day is Krishna Himself, and the validity of the observance holds. Thus, there is nothing incorrect about the suggestion earlier made for choosing the later date than a disputed ekAdashI; even if the later date is also in conflict, as long as it is considered either ekAdashI or dvAdashI, there is no lapse on one's part. It is desirable to avoid dashamI, but there is no flaw if dvAdashI is not avoided.

At that, one may object that the statement made in verse 145, and

reinforced in verse 154, that it is necessary to break the fast on the right date even if it is present for only a fragment of the whole day, is not plausible—there is no way one could cook and eat a meal in the short amount of time that may be available. To answer this, it is stated:

##

pArayitvodakenApi bhuJNjano naiva dushhyati |
ashitAnashitA yasmAdApo vidvadbhirIritAH |
aMbhasA kevalenaiva karishhye vratapAraNam.h || 158 ||

##

> [If there is insufficient time] there is no flaw if water is consumed for pAraNe; for it is stated by the learned that water has the property that when consumed, it is still as if one has not consumed; thus, with only water, do I perform the ceremonial paraNe.

If there is not enough time for a proper pAraNe, then the fast may be broken merely by sipping water; there is no flaw of multiple pAraNe-s on this account, as the wise have decreed that such a procedure does not count as multiple pAraNe-s. Having performed the ceremonial pAraNe in this manner, one may have a proper meal later, even though the time later may not be appropriate for pAraNe itself.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may object that the ekAdashI observance is far too hard in itself, and also complicated according to the rules stated, for one to undertake it seriously, and as such, one proposes to stick to some simpler observance like pilgrimages, which one can at least complete with ease; with time, one may even accumulate enough merit to make up for the benefit lost due to the non-observances of ekAdashI-s. To answer that, it is said:

##

> na kAshI na gayA gaN^gA na revA na cha gautamI |
> na chApi kauravaM xetraM tulyaM bhUpa harerdinAt.h || 159 ||

##

Not Kashi, not Gaya or Ganga, not Narmada, and not also the Godavari;
not even the Kurukshetra, is comparable, O King, to [the observance
of] Hari's day.

Therefore, since pilgrimages, &c., are no match for the potency of the ekAdashI, where is the question of one making up for the latter with the former instead?

At that, one may ask what if one were able to step up one's efforts: instead of a measly dip in the Ganga, what if one were able, say, to undertake the vAjapeya or the ashvamedha instead? Surely, then the above argument would not apply? To answer this, it is stated:

##

ashvamedhasanasrANi vAjapeyashatAni cha |
ekAdashyupavAsasya kalAM nArhanti shhoDashIm.h || 160 ||

##

A thousand ashvamedha-s, and a hundred vAjapeya-s as well;
do not, under any circumstance, add up to even a sixteenth of
an ekAdashI.

Therefore, even in case of very difficult observances, the same limitation holds, and as such, even if one were able to undertake such, there still would be no cause for one to give up the ekAdashI in their stead.

At that, one may ask what special quality or property obtains in respect of ekAdashI-s that lacks in other virtuous tasks, and which justifies the claims made above? To answer that, it is stated:

##

ekAdashIsamutthena vahninA pAtakendhanam.h |
bhasmIbhavati rAjendra api janmashatodbhavam.h || 161 ||

##

With the ekAdashI as fire, and sin as fuel; [the latter] gets
incinerated, O King, even if it be obtained of hundreds of lifetimes.

Therefore, while other actions can bring some benefits, none of them quite matches up to the power of an ekAdashI in terms of removing the accumulation of sins which brings one misery.

At that, one may ask if there perchance might be some observance of some kind, which possibly one is not aware of but is easier to undertake than the ekAdashI, which has the same qualities claimed in respect of ekAdashI

- surely, such a one would be the one to choose. To answer this, it is

stated:

##

nedR^ishaM pAvanaM kiJNchinnarANAM bhuvi vidyate |
yAdR^ishaM padmanAbhasya dinaM pAtakanAshanam.h || 162 ||

##

There is nothing whatsoever quite the purifier of humans; as is the
day of Padmanabha, which destroys sin.

It being the case that the ekAdashI is the day of Krishna, the Destroyer of sin, other observances which do not have a direct link to Him needs must be inferior to it. For this reason, one is not to agonize thinking that there might be some simpler solution which one is not aware of, and knowledge of which might make it unnecessary for one to undertake the ekAdashI which one is currently obliged to.

Having heard that, one would be likely to ask if the ekAdashI, though effective, is still only a partial remedy and spares some sins from annihilation which would then remain to be suffered. The next verse lays this doubt to rest as follows:

##

tAvatpApAni dehe.asminstishhThanti manujAdhipa |
yAvannoposhhayejjantuH padmanAbhadinaM shubham.h || 163 ||

##

Sins can reside in the body of the human only so long, O King;
as long as the creature does not observe a fast on the day of
Padmanabha.

Therefore, it is not the case that the ekAdashI is, or can be, only

partially effective; one is to understand that sins can abide in one only as long as one allows them to by defaulting on the ekAdashI observance. For this reason, there should be no reason for one to question the wisdom of undertaking ekAdashI in preference to other austerities.

At that, one may ask if the above claims are really sensible, for there are may different ways in which one can sin, and the range and magnitude of one's sins is such that it is difficult to accept that just one observance could possibly cover all of them. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ekAdashendriyaiH pApaM yatkR^itaM bhavati prabho |
ekAdashyupavAsena tatsarvaM vilayaM nayet.h || 164 ||

##

The sins which are committed of the eleven indriya-s, O Lord;
by the fasting on ekAdashI, all of them are destroyed.

The eleven indriya-s referred to are (i) the mind; the five organs of

action -- (ii) hands, (iii) feet, (iv) organs of speech, (v) the excretory organs, and the (vi) procreatory organs; and the five organs of knowledge -- (vii) vision, (viii) hearing, (ix) smell, (x) taste, and (xi) touch.
All sins of these 'ekAdasha-indriya'-s are destroyed by the restraints placed upon them on ekAdashI when none is to be used for sensory satisfaction, and as such, there is no reason to doubt that the ekAdashI is potent in removing all sins, no matter what their source.

At that, one may object that as a flawed and failing individual, one is liable to slip up and allow one's sense-organs to get at least temporarily diverted during the ekAdashI observance, so that the stern requirements assumed above are not met. For such a one as oneself, then, the above reasoning surely cannot hold? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ekAdashIsamaM kiJNchitpApatrANaM na vidyate |
vyAjenApi kR^itaM rAjan.h na darshayati bhAskarIm.h || 165 ||

##

There is nothing comparable to ekAdashI in terms of remedy for sin; even if carried out for fraud/ostentation, O King, one does not have to face the son of Surya (Yama).

Therefore, if one is worried about sinning on ekAdashI, then the

observance itself is the best remedy, so the very tendency to sin should spur one on to observe ekAdashI-s, rather than deter one from them. Even if one thinks that one is not improving fast enough, then even an incorrect observance is immensely beneficial and ought not to be neglected.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may object that the advice given thus far is inappropriate: an abstainer is a "weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure" (The Devil's Dictionary), and thus, one who imagines that it is possible to give up sensual actions on ekAdashI is merely giving in to another sensual action, perhaps one of the mind, and thus the ekAdashI may as well be given up. To answer this, the next verse states:

##

shrIvedavyAsa uvAcha

sa brahmahA sa goghnashcha sa steno gurutalpagaH |
ekAdashyAM tu bhuJNjAnaH paxayorubhayorapi || 166 ||

##

He is [as] a killer-of-brAhmaNa; he is [as] a killer-of-cow as well;
he is [as] a thief, and [as] one who cohabits with a Guru's wife

- one who eats on ekAdashI, in either paxa.

Therefore, it is not only the case that fasting on ekAdashI brings

benefits, but is also the case that not fasting would cause one to be considered akin to one who has committed a mahA-pAtaka. Therefore, it is not to be imagined that the ekAdashI observance is merely another form of sensory attachment that may as well be given up in favor of more reasonable attachments.

At that, one may say that since it has earlier been stated (verse 33, etc.) that a sinner may obtain redemption by remembering Krishna, why must it not be that one skips the ekAdashI, and simply remembers Krishna instead? Surely, that is a reasonable solution that requires one to incur no strain. To answer this, the next verse states:

##

varaM svamAtR^igamanaM varaM gomAMsabhaxaNam.h |
varaM hatyA surApAnamekAdashyAM tu bhojanAt.h || 167 ||

##

It is better to have intercourse with one’s mother; it is better to eat beef; it is better to commit murder, or to drink liquor, than it is to eat on ekAdashI.

While such sins may be forgiven by remembering Krishna, not so if the ekAdashI is deliberately missed on the pretext that one will remember Krishna to expiate the sin resulting. As such, the excuse given has no value.

At that, one may point out that in one’s daily life, one sees so many

people, even admittedly religious ones, who do not fast on ekAdashI; it is hard to believe that all these people are such gross sinners, and given this, one cannot accept that not observing the vrata is such a gross excess as has been claimed. To answer this, it is stated:

##

ekAdashIdine puNye buJNjate ye narAdhamAH |
avalokya mukhaM teshhAM Adityamavalokayet.h || 168 ||

##

On the pious day of ekAdashI, those who eat, are the lowest of

humans; having seen their faces, see the sun afterwards.

It is customary to see the sun or other auspicious entity after sighting an unpleasant sight such as a corpse; the verse says that even the sighting of the faces those who do not observe ekAdashI qualifies to be called such an impious sight that one needs to see the sun after such a one. As such, it is not proper to claim that because good people also deliberately skip ekAdashI, so may one—no one who deliberately skips ekAdashI may hardly be called anything but a member of the scum of humankind.

At that, one may object that the claims made above in showing why ekAdashI is not to be avoided, are truly weird and unbelievable, for one just cannot accept that so many undoubtedly good people are really the scum of society; one is also aware that the real problems of society lie elsewhere, and the present emphasis on ekAdashI is completely misplaced and unfounded. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

pR^ithivyAM yAni pApAni brahmahatyAdikAni cha |
annamAshritya tishhThanti samprApte harivAsare || 169 ||

##

Whatever sins are found in the world, even be they great ones like brahma-hatyA, etc.; they all derive from the fact that food is consumed on the day-of-Hari (ekAdashI).

The lack of observance of ekAdashI makes even good people in the world suffer the results of their sins, and also blights their righteous natures and props up their negative tendencies. Hence even good people are seen in the world to commit great offenses, and the widespread lack of morality in the world, and its disastrous consequences, thus follow from the fact that there is a widespread disregard for ekAdashI; were this to be remedied, society's problems as a whole would be as well.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask how it is to be

expected that all are to fast; surely, for example, the very young and the very old cannot be expected to undertake such a difficult vrata. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ashhTavarshhAdhiko yastu ashItirnahi pUryate |
yo bhuN^kte mAnavaH pApo vishhNorahani chAgate || 170 ||

##

One who is greater than eight years of age, but has indeed not completed eighty; the human who eats when Vishnu's day arrives, consumes verily sin itself.

Thus, while the very young, old, and infirm may claim legitimate

exceptions to the otherwise-universal rule, it is improper to say that the rule cannot be universal and thus cannot be applicable at all as claimed.

At that, one may ask what one is to do considering that one's near and dear ones do not observe ekAdashI—surely, considering them to be gross sinners, etc., is inappropriate, and an exception may be made for them? And likewise for oneself as well? To answer that, it is stated:

##

pitA vA yadi vA putro bhAryA vA.api suhR^ijjanaH |
padmanAbhadine bhuN^kte nigrAhyo dasyuvadbhavet.h || 171 ||

##

Whether it be one's father, or one's son, or one's wife, or even one's well-wishers; they who eat on Padmanabha's day are to be known as subject to punishment, just as criminals are.

Therefore, it is not proper for one to think that because one's near and dear ones—to whom one is fondly attached to the point where one is prepared to overlook all their shortcomings—do not observe the ekAdashI, one may neglect to observe it as well. The rules apply to everyone regardless of one's fondness or otherwise for them.

At that, one may ask what if one's near and dear ones have fasted on

dvAdashI instead, under the exception rules stated in earlier verses? Should one then think that because one fasted on the ekAdashI and they on dvAdashI, one still must regard them as no better than common thieves? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

uposhhyA dvAdashI puNyA sarvapApaxayapradA |
na pashyanti yamaM vA.api narakANi na yAtanAm.h || 172 ||

##

Those who fast upon the dvAdashI, as it is the giver of the end to all one's sins; do not have to see Yama, nor suffer the torture of naraka.

As such, there is no need for one to make such an assumption; even those who observe the fast on dvAdashI when appropriate are to be considered good people only, as by verse 157, there is no lapse which would render them anything but.

At that, one may say, that's all well and good, but isn't this extended lecture on ekAdashI a tad bit tiresome? Why not just say "observe ekAdashI," and move on to the next topic? Is it really necessary to waste our precious times with this lengthy discourse? To answer this, it is stated:

##

raTantIha purANAni bhUyo bhUyo varAnane |
na bhoktavyaM na bhoktavyaM samprApte harivAsare || 173 ||

##

The Purana-s say this over and over for one to memorize, O one of sound head; “One is not to eat, one is not to eat”—when the day-of-Hari arrives. (*)

The emphasis given is hence quite justified, since it would not do simply to say it once and risk partial knowledge of lack of understanding of its importance, on the part of the audience. The texts therefore repeat the instruction so often that one might think they were asking one to memorize it—one must understand the instruction not to eat on ekAdashI as well as one does something known by heart.

At that, one may say that since an exception has been stated in respect of those too young or too old to observe ekAdashI, the instruction apparently would not apply to them, and as such, there is nothing that one needs must observe throughout one’s life. The effect of this is to say that the statements of the Purana-s needs must be only partially valid (for being valid only with respect to some people), which would cast a doubt upon their whole validity, and thus on the whole ekAdashI requirement that derives from them. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

dvAdashI na pramoktavyA yAvadAyuH pravartate |
archanIyo hR^ishhIkesho vishuddhenAntarAtmanA || 174 ||

##

The dvAdashI is not to be neglected, as long as life goes on;
Hrshikesha is to be worshipped [for so long] with a clean psyche.

Therefore, the statement that the ekAdashI may be avoided by those absolutely unable to observe it, does not exclude the observance of the dvAdashI pAraNe for those yet able to; there hence is no basis for saying that since the statements of the Purana-s cannot apply to all they might not apply to any, and hence might be wholly invalid.

(*) ‘varAnane’ is probably a reference to Parvati, with the speaker being Rudra; cf. ‘sahasranAmatattulyaM rAma-nAma varAnane’, etc.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say that all that has been stated is quite well, but in fact one is too poor to offer meaningful worship to Krishna; one seems to notice many examples of flashy worship performed by those having large discretionary incomes, and as one is not among them, one is not regarded as a true devotee by society, and perhaps thus not by the Lord either. What use, then, is it for one to undertake ekAdashI and other things? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

bhaktyA grAhyo hR^ishhIkeshho na dhanairdharaNisurAH |
bhaktyA saMpUjito vishhNoH phalaM datteH samAhitam.h || 175 ||

##

Hrshikesha is graspable only with devotion, and not by wealth,
O sura-s of the world; it is guaranteed that when Vishnu is
worshipped with devotion, results of the same will be given.

It being the case that devotion rather than display of wealth is the

important means of serving the Lord, lack of wealth need not cause one to think that one is not capable of obtaining His grace. When service with devotion is performed, the results of the same are bound to occur.

At that, one may yet wonder if Krishna is less pleased with a poor man's devotion than with that of one of wealth; if so, then perhaps even though the poor may yet obtain results due to their devotion, they do yet lose out on some benefits for being unable to serve as do the wealthy. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

jalenApi jagannAthaH pUjitaH kleshanAshanaH |
paritoshhaM vrajatyAshu tR^ishhArtAstu yathA jalaiH || 176 ||

##

Even if with water, the Master of the Universe, the Remover of flaws,
is worshipped; He is pleased thereby, as is one parched with thirst
when given water.

Although Krishna is verily the Lord and Master of all that exists, and

thus has no use for any other source of satisfaction, and is in fact the source of satisfaction wherever it may be found, He yet is extremely pleased merely with an offering of water made with devotion.

At that, one may ask how and when devotion towards Krishna is to be practiced, even granting that it may be practiced by one of little wealth. If the devotion is to be practiced only at some special times or in some difficult way that makes it impossible for some, then this whole discussion is of no use to one. To answer this, it is said:

##

AsInasya shayAnasya tishhThato vrajato.api vA |

ramasva puNDarIkAxa nR^isiMha hR^idaye mama || 177 ||

##

When seated, or lying down, or sitting, or even while walking;
O Pundarikaksha, the Nrsimha who resides in one's hearts, be pleased.

While one is performing any kind of activity or even is not performing any, one is to think of Krishna as being present in oneself, and serve Him thereby with the objective of pleasing Him.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask: why should Krishna be worshipped at all times and in all states, and not just in a convenient few? It surely is not sensible to expect one to keep thinking of Him all the time, even if it be granted that He is to be thought of. The next verse deals with this objection as follows:

##

sarvagashcha sa sarvAtman.h sarvAvasthAsu chAchyuta |
ramasva puNDarIkAxa nR^isiMha hR^idaye mama || 178 ||

##

The Omnipresent, and the inner motivator of all, and also present in all states; O Pundarikaksha, the Nrsimha who resides in one's heart, be pleased.

In order to completely understand that the Lord is the antaryAmI, it is

essential for one to think of Him even during the course of one's normal activities, and in various conditions; simply attempting to worship Him at some times only would lead to the delusion that He is merely important with respect to a fixed set of circumstances, or that His power is limited. The firm knowledge that He is the motivator of oneself in all states and dispositions can only arise if one attempts to think of Him in all states and dispositions. Hence, to realize that Krishna is present everywhere, is the motivator of oneself and all others, and is also present in all states of being, happiness, etc., it is essential that He be the object of one's thoughts at all times.

At that, the natural question to ask is, exactly how should one think of Krishna, in all states and times? The next verse says:

##

> karAvalaMbanaM dehi shrIkR^ishhNa kamalexaNa |
> bhavapaN^kArNave ghore majjato mama shAshvata || 179 ||

##

> Give me the support of Your Hand, O Sri Krishna whose eyes are as a lotus; lift me permanently out of the gory world which is as a sea of filth.

One is to realize that one needs Krishna's support, that He is of

un-worldly beauty and fine qualities, that the world is always full of

misery and cannot be the final recourse for oneself, and that He is the only one who can rescue one from the miseries of embodied existence—when one is able to do this constantly and in all states of being, not just in circumstances of unpleasant nature and such, it may be said that one is worshipping Krishna correctly.

At that, one may say that it is not correct to ask that one accept that

the world is as an ocean of misery; it certainly has its unpleasant aspects and fearsome moments, but one's life is not made up only of suffering, and given the enjoyment that one is also able to obtain, it is unrealistic to ask one to realize the unworthiness of worldly existence and worship Krishna on that basis. To answer this, the next verse states:

##

trAhi trAhi jagannAtha vAsudevAchyutAvyayam.h |
mAM samuddhara govinda mR^ityusaMsArasAgarAt.h || 180 ||

##

Rescue me, rescue me, O Lord of the Universe, Vasudeva who art

flawless and unchanging; uplift me, O Govinda, from the ocean of death and worldly existence.

The fact is, one is completely unable to stop the inevitable change that

will doubtless rob one of any gains that might be a cause of joy at any given time; even joys are also not without limitations that circumscribe them severely. Even if it be that life has its pleasant moments, it is seen that those are but fleeting, and invariably lead to others less desirable, and that even while present, the joys themselves do have deficiencies that cause want and suffering. Now, even in the world, it is seen that joy that is longer-lasting or unalloyed to a greater degree is preferable over one that is less so. As such, only Vasudeva, the Lord of the world, who is flawless and unchanging, can be the source of constant joy for oneself; as long as one's joy is due to impermanent and imperfect sources, so will the joy itself be. Therefore, there is no basis for arguing that even given the fleeting pleasures that may be encountered, the world is anything but as an ocean of misery.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say that there is no way on Earth that one could possibly practice the worship of Krishna to the very high standards expected therein. Rightly or wrongly, one has one's limitations, and any prescription for one's conduct must therefore keep these in mind. To deal with this, the next verse therefore says:

##

klinnaM pAdodakenaiva yasya nityaM kalevaram.h |
tIrthakoTisahasraistu snAto bhavati pratyaham.h || 181 ||

##

If the body is wet daily by the pAdodaka [of one such as described previously], then the results obtained by a thousand crore of [ceremonial] baths at pilgrimage centers is grossly exceeded.

It has earlier been stated (verse 95) that the pAdodaka of Vishnu is far greater than any pilgrimage could ever be; here, the dominance of the pAdodaka of even a true devotee of Vishnu who lives by the precepts earlier stated, is shown, and a path for lesser talents such as oneself is also indicated thereby: while it is certainly true that one cannot, in one’s present condition, perform to the standards expected in earlier verses, what one should try to do is perform the service of great devotees such as (to take an example entirely at random) Sri Raghavendra, by which all the benefits that could possibly be expected of any number of pilgrimages, is exceeded.

At that, one may wonder if one has any direct right of worship of Krishna at all, or is merely advised to be content to serve His worshippers instead. To answer this, it is stated:

##

toyaM yadi pibennityaM shAlagrAmashilAchyutam.h |
tIrthakoTisahasraistu snApitaiH kiM prayojanam.h || 182 ||

##

For one who drinks daily the water which has been used on the

shAlagrAma-stone of Achyuta; what use is there for him, in taking the [ceremonial] baths of a thousand crore tIrtha-s?

It therefore becomes evident that while one certainly is to serve one's superiors, one is also obliged to offer worship of Krishna to the best of one's abilities, as well. There is no excuse for one to give up such worship on the plea of incompetence.

At that, one may express the doubt that one's worship of Krishna's

sAligrAma is likely as not to amount to little more than mere handling of the stones, as one has not the depth of perception to offer meaningful worship. If one then proceeds with such inadequate worship, will the Lord still be pleased thereby? To answer this, the next verse states:

##

sAlagrAmashilAsparshaM ye kurvanti dine dine |
vAJNchanti karasaMsparshaM teshhAM devAH savAsavAH || 183 ||

##

Those who have contact with a sAlagrAma-stone day after day;
[even] the devA-s and the vasu-s desire to shake their hands.

Therefore, there is no need to feel that one’s pUjA is essentially

worthless; even with minimally satisfactory pUjA, the nature of the worshipped is such that there is immense benefit in remedying the terrors of the hereafter, and making it so that one is warmly received in the afterlife rather than subjected to ordeals.

At that, one may say that there has been frequent reference to the

difficulties of the afterlife, but as one is not acquainted with any of these, one is disinclined to accept that they exist, and therefore, any arguments based upon them needs must be disregarded as well. To answer this, it is said:

##

duHsaho nArako vahnirduHsahA yamakiN^karAH |
vishhamashchAntakapathaH pretatvaM chAtidAruNam.h || 184 ||

##

Difficult to bear is the fire of ***, difficult to bear are
the servants of Yama; dreadful is the path of the dead, and
being a ghost is extremely terrifying as well.

In successive stages it is indicated that all the possibilities of an

afterlife where one has to suffer for one's sins, are most unpleasant and worthy of avoidance. Being in *** is the worst of all, of course, but even if one does not get all the way there, even one's treatment at the hands of Yama's servants is most painful; before that, even the path to be taken in passing from this world is not an easy one, and even if one does not complete the journey but remains attached to the present world as a disembodied being, even that is a most horrendous fate. As such, there is no possibility for ignoring the difficulties that await oneself if one does not worship Krishna.

Having known the following, what is one to do? The next verse says:

##

saJNchintya manasA.apyevaM pAtakAdvinivartayet.h |
smaraNaM kIrtanaM vishhNoH sadaiva na parityajet.h || 185 ||

##

Even thinking in one's mind [of the previous] removes the tendency to sin; [for] the remembrance and worship of Vishnu are to be never given up.

The understanding of the difficulties to be faced due to sin is doubtless a factor is reducing one's propensity to sin, but above and beyond that, it is an aid to helping one to fix one's mind on Vishnu constantly.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say, that's all well, but one is not concerned about difficulties in the afterlife as much as one is about those in the present one. The afterlife and its difficulties are yet unknown and of uncertain nature, so what's the point of basing one's decisions in consideration of them? To answer this, the next verse states:

##

shrI vedavyAsa uvAcha

achyutAnantagovindanAmochchAraNabhIshhitAH |
nashyanti sakalA rogAH satyaM satyaM vadAmyaham.h || 186 ||

##

Fearful on account of the utterances of the names of Achyuta, Ananta, and Govinda;
all illnesses are destroyed—thus the truth, the truth, do I speak.

As the deities who produce illness are not more powerful than Krishna, it is emphasized that they are powerless to afflict one who has obtained His grace by applying himself in the manner previously described. Hence, it cannot be said that the previous procedure is only of otherworldly use.

In response, one may say that even if that be true, one's success at any such effort is likely to be patchy and unlikely to produce lasting benefits.

Given one’s incompetence, what use, then, is it for one to attempt such a procedure when one might as well devote oneself to smaller, likelier goals? To answer, it is said:

##

sakR^iduchchAritaM yena harirityaxaradvayam.h |
baddhaH parikarastena moxAya gamanaM prati || 187 ||

##

Even if the bisyllabic ‘Hari’ be uttered only once;
you have made a beginning towards achieving moksha.

It being the case that even if one were to falter, one’s effort will still

have counted for something, and that one will eventually obtain the right goal, there is no reason to fear that lack of competence means that one might as well not try to worship at all (cf. Bhagavad Gita VI-40, et seq.).

At that, one may wonder if only persons such as oneself, who are of severely limited capacities, should engage in Krishna’s worship in this manner, while those who are not so limited may engage in other activities or manners of worship. If so, then one is belittled, and perhaps the worship itself is rather unworthy as well? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

evaM brahmAdayo devA R^ishhayashcha tapodhanAH |
kIrtayanti surashreshhThaM devaM nArAyaNaM prabhum.h || 188 ||

##

And then, too, the deities headed by Brahma, and the Rshhi-s of great penance;
praise the foremost of the sura-s, the Deity Narayana, who is the Lord.

Therefore, it is incorrect to postulate that the worship indicated is only for the lowly. Even those of great accomplishment and capability do it out of knowledge of its worth, and thus so must one as well.

At this, one may ask if the standards are not, on that account, a tad bit too high; there is no way one can achieve the realization of Narayana's paramountcy and Lordship over all and worship Him on that basis, as the great ones do. One does not know the sura-s, and hence cannot worship Krishna as being the best among them—as such, one's worship will truly be a pittance as one cannot appreciate Him in the same manner as they of greater worth. Is one's worship still worthwhile, keeping this in mind? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

kiM tasya dAnaiH kiM tIrthaiH kiM tapobhiH kimadhvaraiH |
yo nityaM dhyAyate devaM nArAyaNamananyadhIH || 189 ||

##

To what purpose his generosity, to what pilgrimages, to what penance or sacrifice?

- for one who performs dhyAna with Narayana as his Deity?

Even in case of one who does not have the fullness of realization found in great seekers such as Brahma, even one who merely worships Krishna knowing

Him to be one's only Deity certainly does better than the same one

performing any other kind of spiritual activity.

At that, one may ask, exactly how is one to know Narayana, then, as it is not possible for one to know Him as the highly realized do? Surely it would not do to ask one to perform dhyAna upon a Deity whose nature is not fixed in one's mind, and then, too, it would not do to fix it incorrectly either—hence, one must have some qualities of His in mind that are both accurate and yet graspable by oneself. To answer this, it is stated:

##

nityotsavo nityayasho nityashrIrnityasho jayaH |
yeshhAM hR^idistho bhagavAn.h maN^gaLAyatano hariH || 190 ||

##

Every day is a festival, every day brings fame, every day brings riches,
and victory;
in whose heart is situated the Bhagavan, the Hari of auspicious qualities.

Therefore, one is to worship Hari, to the best of one's abilities, as being the Deity situated within one's own self, and also as being possessed of all manner of good qualities (and hence removed from all flaws), and as the one who gives all manner of joy in one's life.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may ask why it is simply not possible to expend all of one's sins in the usual fashion, and why one must be bothered about trying to understand Krishna, etc.

In answer are given the following two verses, which have been quoted by our author himself in his gItA-bhAshhya III-4 (under the verse 'na karmaNAmanArambhAnnaishhkarmyaM purushho.ashnute'), and partly explained by him and more so by his commentator in the same context. I quote in part from there:

yadi karmAkaraNena muktiH syAt.h sthAvarANAM cha | na chAkaraNe karmAbhAvAnmuktirbhavati | pratijanmakR^itAnAmanantAnAM karmaNAM bhAvAt.h | na cha sarvANi karmANi bhuktAni | ekasmin.h sharIre
bahUni hi karmANi karoti | tAni chaikaikAni bahujanmaphalAni
kAnichit.h | tatra chaikaikAni karmANi bhuJNjanprApnotyeva
sheshheNa mAnushhyam.h | tatasha bahusharIraphalAni karmANi iti
asamAptiH | tachchoktam.h \-\-

If by simply not performing karma mukti were possible, then even insentients should. Indeed, by not acting, due to lack of karma, mukti is not obtained. Not all karma-s are expended. In just one body, lots of karma-s are performed. In each one, fruits for many [subsequent] lives are obtained. And in order to expend each of the karma-s, a human body certainly must be obtained again. Thus, due to the large number of bodies' worth of karma performed in each one, this process is non-terminating. And it also stated:

##

jIva.nshchaturdashAdUrdhvaM purushho niyamena tu |
strI vA.apyanUnadashakaM dehaM mAnushhamArjate || 191 ||

chaturdashordhvajIvIni saMsArashchAdivarjitaH |
ato.avittvA paraM devaM moxAshA kA mahAmune || 192 ||

##

iti brAhme | yadi sAdiH syAtsaMsAraH pUrvakarmAbhAvAdatatprAptiH | abandhakaM tvakAmenaiva bhavati | tachcha vaxyate 'anishhTamishhTam.h' iti |

"A man, as a rule, after the age of fourteen, or a woman also; earns upwards of ten human lifetimes of work. This world is without beginning; therefore, without having known the Supreme Deity, how can there be hope for mukti, O great sage?"

- says the Brahma. If saMsAra (i.e., the chain of karma) were to

  have a beginning, then on account of lack of previous karma, it would not have existed at all (all karma requires previous karma to justify its existence). Lack of bondage (i.e., mukti) would indeed happen without even wishing for it. It will also be stated (in the 'Gita): 'anishhTAM ishhTam.h', thus (BG XVIII-12).

The prameya-dIpikA commentary on all of the above is as follows; no translation is offered, and perhaps someone else may care to work one out.

'yadi' iti | 'syAt.h' ityasya pUrvottarAbhyAM sambandhaH | 'sthAvarANAM' ityanadhikR^itopalaxanam.h | tatashchAnAdau saMsAre.anadhikR^itadehasya sambhavena muktiprasaN^gAdadhunApi dR^ishyamAnaM purushhatvaM na syAditi bhAvaH | dvitIyanirAse.api asyaiva ardhasya tAtparyamAha \-\- 'na cha' iti | karmAbhAvAt.h saMsArabIjAbhAvAt.h | atra naishhkarmyamiti muktinAmaiva | na tu parapramANAnuvAdaH | kuto na bhavatItyato.atrApi purushhatvAditi hetumabhipretyAha \-\- 'pratIti' iti | janmani janmani kR^itAnAmityarthaH | purushhatvena anAdau samsAre adhikR^itAnantajanmasambhavAttatra kR^itAnAmanantakarmaNAM bhAvAt.h kimadyAkaraNamAtreNa bhavatItyarthaH | nanu pUrvapUrva sharIrakR^itAni karmANyuttarottarasharIre bhuktAni | tatkutaH anantakarmaNAM bhAva ityata Aha \-\- 'na cha' iti | kuto netyata Aha \-\- 'ekasmin.h' iti | hishabdo hetau | bahUnyapi bhujyatAM ko doshha ityata Aha \-\- 'tAni cha' iti | tAni cha kAnichiditi sambandhaH | 'ekaikAni' iti pratyekamityarthaH | tathAvidhAni apyanadhikR^itajanmabhirbhuktAni ityata Aha \-\- 'tatra cha' iti | teshhu karmasu | bhuJNjan.h bhuJNjAnaH | sheshheNa karmasheshheNa | mAnushhye chAkaraNamasambhAvitamityAha \-\- 'tatashcha' iti | asamAptirbhogenaiva karmaNAmiti sheshhaH |

sambhAvanAmAtreNedamuditaM na tu pramitamityata Aha \-\- ‘tat.h cha’ iti | chaturdashAdvarshhAt.h | anUno dashako yasyeti vigrahaH |

hrasvadIrghavyatyayena ‘chaturdashordhvajIvanI iti striyA visheshhaNam.h | saMsArashcheti karmaNAmanantatvopapAdanam.h | ato bhogena xayAsambhavAt.h | avittvA aviditvA | purushhashabdena anAdidehasambandha uktaH | so.ashiddha ityata Aha \-\- ‘yadi’ iti | atatprAptirAkasmikasya saMsArasyAprAptiH syAt.h | ataH purushhatvaM siddhamiti | nanu santu prAgbhavIyAnyanantakarmANi | tathApi bandhakAni kathaM prexAvatA kriyeran.h ? na hyanantAni pApAni prAktanAni santItyetAvatA.adya kriyanta ityata Aha \-\- ‘abandhakaM tu’ iti | karmaNAM bandhAhetutvaM tvakAmAdinaiva bhavati | na

tvakaraNena | pratyavAyasyaiva prApterityarthaH | akAme abandhakatvaM bhagavatsammataM iti bhAvena Aha \-\- ‘tachcha’ iti |

This verse follows up on the previous two, and its purport is well explained by the gItA-bhAshhya on III-4, part of which was quoted previously:

##

AchaturdashamAdvarshhAtkarmANi niyamena tu |
dashAvarANAM dehAnAM kAraNAni karotyayam.h |
ataH karmaxayAnmuktiH kuta eva bhavishhyati || 193 ||

##

After the age of fourteen, as a rule, karma-s of such extent

as would require ten [future] bodies to use, are performed;
thus, how can there be mukti due to exhaustion of karma?

This shows why, as stated in the gItAbhAshhya, it is impossible to exhaust karma-s by spending them off; more are created during the spending than are spent, so a Zeno's paradox situation occurs.

It has previously been stated (verse 183, etc.) that one who undertakes worship of Krishna in the prescribed fashion is considered noble, and subsequently it was clarified that such action is without an alternative as one cannot obtain mukti by simply expending one's karma. However, does this mean that if one performs such worship, there is nothing else for one to do? The next verse answers as follows:

##

samAnAM vishhamA pUjA vishhamANA samA tathA |
kriyate yena devo.api svapadAdbhrashyate hi saH || 194 ||

##

If equals (or superiors) be treated with venom, and the unworthy
as equals; even by the deities, then they indeed lose their
exalted positions.

While it important to worship in accordance with the rules described, it is not enough that one merely do so; it is also essential that one recognize worth—and lack thereof—in others, and behave with them

accordingly. Even the high honors earned by one on account of correct knowledge and worship of Krishna would not avert one's downfall if this were not done.

At that, one may ask what the criteria are for determining worth in

another. The next verse answers as follows:

##

> vittaM bandhurvayaH karma vidyA chaiva tu paJNchamI |
> etAni mAnyasthAnAni garIyo yadyaduttaram.h || 195 ||

##

> Wealth, kinship, age, [virtuous] actions, and especially learning as the fifth; these are the metrics of honor, with each being more important than the previous.

Therefore, if one is inclined to honor a rich stranger more than a poor kinsman, or even an ignorant kinsman more than a learned stranger, one is doing wrong. Learning is especially set off from the crowd of virtues, and is in a class by itself.

At that,, one may object that this pep talk about how to treat people is really far afield from the subject of the present discussion. To answer this, the next verse says—

##

guNAnusAriNIM pUjAM samAM dR^ishhTaM cha yo naraH |
sarvabhUteshhu kurute tasya vishhNuH prasIdati || 196 ||

##

In accordance with their qualities, the human who treats all,
as the worship of the Lord who is nondifferent in all beings,
by his worship Vishnu is pleased.

It is essential to understand that Krishna is not different in various beings because of their various qualities, and by recognizing His essential identity in all beings and treating them according to their respective worths, one worships Him as present in all, and earns His grace. (More about this may be learned from the prameya-dIpikA and gItA-vivR^itti on Bhagavad Gita V-18.)

At that, one may say that this interpretation of ‘sama’ is incorrect; the straightforward way of understanding would be to say that all must be treated identically, with no difference at all, and to instead say that all must be treated according to their respective worths, knowing the Lord to be identical in them, is a twisted idea and cannot be accepted. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yathA suhR^itsu kartavyaM pitR^ishatrusuteshhU cha |
tathA karoti pUjAdi samabuddhiH sa uchyate || 197 ||

##

Just as should be done with well-wishers, with parents, with enemies, and also with children; one who does so also as worship, he is known as one of uniform intellect.

Therefore, it is not plausible to suggest that all be treated equally, for even the proponents of such an idea cannot treat their enemies and their friends, their children and their parents, etc., identically. Given that distinctions in responsibilities, etc., make for differences in behavior in these cases, we must accept that uniformity of behavior is not possible in general, and that treatment of all according to worth, carried out as worship of Krishna who is non-different in all, alone is reasonable.

At that, one may say that if one comes under the influence of others, one may have to worship others beside Krishna as well. For instance, in order to satisfy the criterion that a learned one is worth more than a kinsman, one would have to listen to a learned one telling one to worship worship another deity or worship in another fashion, more than one listens to an ignorant kinsman asking one to worship Krishna as prescribed. To deal with this doubt, it is said:

##

tiryakpuNDraM na kurvIta saMprApte maraNe.api vA |
na chAnyanAma vibrUyAdR^ite nArAyaNAtparam.h || 198 ||

##

Do not apply the cross-wise mark on your forehead, even if death is threatened; do not also take the name of another as being superior to Narayana.

It is necessary for one to refuse to compromise one's loyalty to Krishna, while regarding all others. Therefore, regardless of any other considerations, it is necessary to disregard anyone who attempts to interfere with one's worship of Krishna in the prescribed manner.

At that, one may say that it is seen in the world that people who are

often strangers to oneself and do not worship Krishna, or do not worship as required, are often of great virtue, while one's kinsmen lack grace and worth. As such, it is necessary to consider those strangers of impressive deeds as being more honorable and illustrious than one's kin who worship Krishna. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

naivedyasheshhaM devasya yo bhunakti dine dine |
sikthe sikthe bhavetpuNyaM chAndrAyaNashatAdhikam.h || 199 ||

##

One who consumes the residue of the Deity's 'naivedya' day after day;
with each morsel, (s)he obtains merit greater than that from hundreds
of chAndrAyaNa-s.

As it has previously been stated that worship of Krishna is far superior to other kinds of virtuous action, it is incorrect to think that someone who does not worship Krishna but does something else is superior in action to a worshipper of Krishna. Similarly, a non-worshipper of Krishna cannot, by definition, be of greater learning than a worshipper.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say that the answer given is not sufficient: while it was stated that one must not apply a 'tiryak.h puNDra', it was later stated that even one merely eating the 'naivedya' of Hari would earn immense merits. However, what about someone who is unable to offer such naivedya day after day, but does not use the cross-wise mark? To answer this, it is stated:

##

UrdhvapuNDramR^ijaM saumyaM lalATe yasya dR^ishyate |
sa chaNDAlo.api shuddhAtmA pUjya eva na saMshayaH || 200 ||

##

On whose forehead may be sighted the pure and pious ‘Urdhva-puNDra’;
even such a ‘chaNDAla’ is a pure soul and fit for praise, without a doubt.

Even someone of such extremely distasteful occupation as a cremation worker, who cannot offer and partake of naivedya on a daily basis—if at all—is a worshipper of Krishna and praiseworthy, if he wears the Urdhva-puNDra having rejected other marks and having refused to entertain the notion that any deity is superior to Narayana.

(N.B. It may also be noted that the Urdhva-puNDra is evidently not meant as a “caste-mark,” and treating it as one is incorrect.)

At that, one may say that simply wearing the Urdhva-puNDra cannot be a catch-all answer; surely it is of no use to someone who is not himself pure of thought and action? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

ashuchirvA.apyanAchAro manasA pApamAcharet.h |
shuchireva bhaven.h nityamUrdhvapuNDrAN^kito naraH || 201 ||

##

Unclean, or not abiding in rules of conduct, or one who sins in his

mind; even such a man becomes pure by wearing the Urdhva-puNDra

daily.

Whether one be unclean, or be unable to abide in required rules of

observance, or even if one be outwardly clean and pious but still unable to restrain one's mind from digressing into sinful avenues, one will eventually become purified by wearing the Urdhva-puNDra constantly.

At that, one may ask: what if someone decides to give up the Urdhva-puNDra in spite of all the previous arguments, because they yet remain unconvinced or have yielded to other pressures or tendencies? To answer this, it is stated:

##

UrdhvapuNDravihInasya shmashAnasadR^ishaM mukham.h |

avalokya mukhaM teshhAM Adityamavalokayet.h || 202 ||

##

The face of one who has given up the Urdhva-puNDra is akin to a

crematorium; having seen the face of such a one, look at the sun.

The face of one who has knowingly and in spite of good advice given up the Urdhva-puNDra ('vi-'+'hIna', for 'vishishhTatayA hIna' = especially, or

comprehensively, lacking in) is a dreadful sight to one who worships Krishna in the manner required. (Compare with verse 168.)

At that, one may ask, what if one does not give it up in toto, but is

often or sometimes without it? To answer this, the next verse states:

##

yaj~no dAnaM tapo homaH svAdhyAyaH pitR^itarpaNam.h |
vyarthaM bhavati tat.h sarvaM UrdhvapuNDraM vinA kR^itam.h || 203 ||

##

Sacrifices, donations, fire-rituals, self-study, and oblation to ancestors; they all become useless, if done without [wearing the] Urdhva-puNDra.

Even if one has casually neglected to worship Krishna in the manner

required, one's otherwise-virtuous actions are useless because one should worship Him always to obtain their best benefits.

After the discussion on the Urdhva-puNDra, one may ask what the story is with the other symbols required by the Pancharatra. To answer this, it is said:

##

gopIchandanaliptAN^go yaM yaM pashyati chaxushhA |
taM taM shuddhaM vijAnIyAnnAtra kAryA vichAraNA || 204 ||

##

Whomever the eyes can see to be wearing the gopI-chandana on their bodies; know them all to be pure, and that in this there is no doubt.

One who wears the Pancharatra symbols of gopIchandana paste on his body as service to Krishna, is, by that very fact, to be considered pure, and in this matter there need be no second thought.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may wonder to what point or purpose one is to know all this detail about how a devotee is supposed to conduct his life, when it is all but certain that one could never adhere to all the rules given. To answer this, it is said:

##

asphoTayanti pitaraH pranR^ityanti pitAmahAH |
vaishhNavo.asmatkule jAto sa naH santArayishhyati || 205 ||

##

> The forefathers exult, and the ancestors dance with joy;
> [saying] a Vaishnava has been born into our family, and he will rescue us from worldly existence!

The common interpretation of this verse is merely that the birth of an illustrious personage in one's family will bring one freedom from the unending cycle of births and deaths. However, though correct, it is not the primary one—a more meaningful and satisfying interpretation is suggested by Sri Raghuttama Tiirtha (who refers to this verse in his commentary on the bR^ihad.hbhAshhya). The kaimutya-nyAya ("what can be bought with fifty units of currency can be bought with a hundred," etc.) is being applied here as follows: the Lord Sri Hari causes the birth of a son who is a joy to his parents (and, if he is a great soul, even to forefathers far removed from him). When the son is perceived to be such a source of joy, how much greater joy must be the Lord's forte, who is able to cause the very son who gives such joy?

Therefore, based on the illustrious commentator's interpretation, we may take it that the verse shows that one must not underestimate Krishna's power to give joy; for by His grace if a worthy devotee were to be born into a lineage, the forefathers &c. would be released just so. Given this, it is only reasonable to accept that Krishna is a bigger source of joy than any son could ever be, and that one must be even more attentive towards His worship than one would be to one's own dearly beloved son. Therefore, carelessness in the matter of adhering to the rules prescribed for His worship is not acceptable. One would not condemn actions towards one's child's needs as silly or archaic, and such feelings are, ipso facto, not suitable in regard to actions required as Krishna's worship, as well.

At that, one may say that in spite of all the previous explanations, and in spite of one's good intentions, one is often unable to perform worship in the proper manner due to one's limitations, and one is liable to feel like giving it all up in despair. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

> jIvitaM vishhNubhaktasya varaM paJNchadinAnyapi |
> na tu kalpasahasraistu bhaktihInasya keshave || 206 ||

##

> It is better for a devotee of Vishnu to have lived a mere five days; than it is for one lacking in devotion towards Keshava to live even for a thousand Kalpa-s.

Therefore, even considering that one is able to keep up the required standards only part of the time, it still is better to at least live up to the required standards whenever one can, than to not try at all.

What if one still refuses to do as advised? The next verse answers:

##

> kiM tena jAtamAtreNa bhUbhAreNAnnashatruNA |

yo jAto nArchayedvishhNuM na smaredvA.api kIrtayet.h || 207 ||

##

Right from the moment of birth is a burden upon the world, and
a waste of food—one who does not worship Vishnu, nor remember
Him, nor praise Him.

If one were to refuse to worship Vishnu in spite of being given ample opportunity to do so, then one might as well be accused of wasting resources that some other seeker might well have used to obtain liberation.

At that, one may say, all right, but what if one does not wholly refuse to worship Krishna, but does worship in a very puny and insignificant manner? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yo dadAti dvijAtibhyashchandanaM gopimarditam.h |
api sarshhapamAtreNa punAtyAsaptakaM kulam.h || 208 ||

##

One who gives to brAhmaNa-s the gift of gopI-chandana;
even in as small an amount as the size of a seed of mustard;

benefits seven generations of his lineage.

Even though one’s abilities and aptitudes are decidedly inferior and insufficient, it would not be proper to reject one’s duties on that account.

One may wonder: knowing this, can one perform small acts of worship only by choice, since they are nonetheless beneficial—and avoid the hassle of constant rigorous worship? To answer this, it is said:

##

j~nAnIha karmANi sado.aditAni |
kuryAdakAmaH satataM bhaveta || 209 ||

##

The one who knows, must perform the ordained duties
without desire for ends, constantly.

True knowledge is that which enables one to rise above the lure of sensory desires and motivations, and to perform required actions constantly simply as service to Krishna. Therefore, to think that one can avoid performing actions because one knows that even a few produce merit, does not count as knowledge—it indeed is the pits of ignorance.

At that, one may ask: what if one knew not just the efficacy of even a

limited number of actions, but much more, or were even an enlightened seeker? Then surely one would not have to worship as required? To answer this, it is said:

##

atItAnagatAj~nAnI trailokyoddharaNaxamaH |
etAdR^isho.api nA.achAraM shrauta smArtaM parityajet.h || 210 ||

##

Knowing the past and the future, and capable of uplifting the three worlds; even if such a one, do not give up the rules of Shruti and Smrti.

As one's abilities, even with very optimistic assessments, do not come anywhere near such a standard, there is no reason for one to think that one can avoid worship.

At this, one may get the doubt: would one's worship be ultimately

fruitful, as one may yet slip up somewhere and be incorrect? To answer this, the next verse says:

##

yadeva vidyayA karoti shraddhayA |
upanishhadA tadeva vIryavattaraM bhavati || 211 ||

##

Whatever is done according to one’s best understanding of
the Lord, and with devotion to Him, by the seeker, that
itself becomes the route to one’s salvation.

Therefore, while one certainly is unable to worship Krishna as greater seekers than oneself can, even one’s puny efforts when carried out to one’s best ability, are sufficient to free one from the cycle of births and deaths.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may have the doubt that actions such as Krishna’s worship are enjoined upon one only until one achieves realization; a realized person has no duties, and thereafter one may abstain from action. Therefore, all that has been said so far is only for the unrealized. To answer this, it is stated:

##

kurvanneveha karmANi jijIvishhechchhataM samAH |
evaM tvayi nAnyatheto.asti na karma lipyate nare || 212 ||

(IshAvAsya upanishhat.h)

##

Only by doing his required duties in life, let one desire to
live for a full hundred years; only thus is it right and
not otherwise, for such karma does not bind the human.

The commentary upon this verse is as follows:

akurvataH karma na lipyata iti nAsti |

'aj~nasya karma lipyeta kR^ishhNopAstimakurvataH |
j~nAnino.api yato hrAsa Anandasya bhaved.h dhruvam.h |
ato.alepe.api lepaH syAdataH kAryaiva sA sadA ||'

- iti nAradIye |

It cannot be said that karma does not bind an inactive person:

"If an ignorant does not worship Krishna, then karma attaches to him; even a learned man (who obtains joy from Krishna in mukti) would suffer reduction of joy [in mukti], without a doubt [were he to desist from worship]; thus, even the one untainted by karma becomes tainted [by his omission], and therefore [such worship] is to be carried out always,"

says the Naradiya.

Sri Jayatiirtha comments upon the mantra and the bhAshhya as follows:

tR^ishhNAvichchhedavat.h svochitakarmAnushhThAnamapyAvashyakaM
j~nAnArthinAmityetat.h ‘kurvanneva’ iti dvitIyamantreNa vidhatte |
tatra nAnyatheto.asti ityetad.h durgamArthatvAd.h vyAkhyAti

- ‘akurvata’ iti |

Just as with (actions in aid of) quenching of thirst, the carrying out of actions is likewise essential for those desirous of knowledge; to say this, the second mantra (of the Upanishad) says ‘kurvanneva’, etc. In that, because ‘nAnyatheto.asti’ is of difficult meaning, it is interpreted (by the bhAshhyakAra), as ‘akurvata’, thus.

tatashchAyaM mantrArthaH—shataM samAH shataM varshhANi iha mAnushhAdijanmani yajjijIvishhet.h jIvitumichchhet.h tatkarmANi svochitAni kurvanneva AmaraNaM bhagavatpUjAtmakAnyasaN^kalpita-phalAni svochitAni karmANi sarvathA kuryAditi yAvat.h | kutaH ? evaM karmANi kurvati nare manushhyamAtre.api tvayi karma pApaM na lipyate | svochitAni asaN^kalpitena phalena karmaNA bhagavatpUjAM kurvantamalpAdhikAriNamapi na prAguttarANi karmANi pApAni bAdhante | tatashcha j~nAnAdhikArI sa bhavatIti yAvat.h | itaH pApAni bAdhanta eva | tatashchAsau j~nAne nAdhikriyate ashuddhachittatvAt.h | ataH karmANi kAryANi—iti |

Thus, also, is the meaning of the mantra—for a hundred years, this human birth, etc.; for as long as life obtains, for that long one’s proper duties are certainly to be performed; the actions such as worship of the Lord, etc., are always to be performed. Why? Because when this is done, even a mere human

such as you would not be tainted by karma, i.e., sin. By performing suitable actions required of oneself without desire for results as the worship of the Lord, even those of low ability are not bound by karma or sin, past or future. Such a one even becomes qualified to obtain knowledge. On account of the performance of actions. That karma does not bind otherwise (i.e., if actions are refrained from), thus is not so. Those who do not worship the Lord are definitely bound by sin. And then, too, they do not obtain knowledge on account of having unclean minds. Therefore, karma-s must be performed—thus.

However, this very verse has been interpreted otherwise also: Sri

Shankara, for instance, sees in the first verse 'IshAvAsyamidaM sarvaM' the indication that the learned do not perform karma on account of perceiving the world to be covered by Ishvara; the ignorant, on the other hand, who wish to live a hundred years and enjoy material life, needs must act.

Our commentator summarizes the other interpretation as follows:

apare vyAchaxate—j~nAninaH sarvakarmatyAgaH pUrvamantreNa vihitaH | yathA IshA IshitrA parameshvareNa yatkiJNcha jagatyAM pR^ithivyAM jagadidaM tatsarvaM vAsyamAchchhAdyaM tena kAraNena tyaktena sarvakarmatyAgena bhuJNjIthAH pAlayethA | evaM tyaktaishhaNastvaM kasyasviddhanaM mA gR^idhaH mA kAN^xIH | athavA mA gR^idhaH kasmAt.h kasyasviddhanaM na kasyApi | ato mithyAvishhaye buddhiM mA kArshhIriti | yastu naramAtro.alpaj~nastaM prati karmAnena matreNochyata—iti |

Others interpret this as follows—by the previous mantra, the renunciation of all actions by the learned is stated. Because by the Isha, i.e., the Lord, the Supreme Being, all of this world, is "infested," or covered, for that reason, observe the giving up of all actions. And then, do not expect any ends. Or otherwise, what kind of wealth could you expect? None whatsoever. Therefore, do not invest your intelligence in illusory subjects, thus. Those who are mere humans, of little learning, for them, the present mantra teaches karma—thus.

So how is the present interpretation justified? Our commentator goes on to say:

tadanupapannam.h | aj~navajj~nAnino.api bhagavatpUjAtmakasvakarma akaraNe pApalepasadbhAvena dvAbhyAmapi tatkartavyatAyAH smArtatvAditi bhAvenAha -- 'aj~nasya', iti | 'kR^ishhNopAstiM svakarmaNA' iti sheshhaH | niyatamoxatvena karmaNAmakiJNchitkaratvAdalepasya j~nAninaH kutaH karmalepa ? ityata Aha -- 'yata', iti | 'hrAso bhavet.h kR^ishhNopAstyakaraNanimittapApena' iti sheshhaH | yato hrAso bhavedato moxaprachyutirUpaleparahite.api j~nAninaH karmalepaH syAdeva | yata evamubhayorlepo.ato dvAbhyAmapi sA kR^ishhNopAstiH kAryaiva ityarthaH |

That (other interpretation) is unsuitable. For just as with the ignorant, even the learned could, on account of non-performance of required duties like the worship of the Lord, incur sin, and thus both (the learned and the ignorant) are instructed; to show this, it is said (in the bhAshhya): 'aj~nasya', thus. On account of lack of performance of one's actions as Krishna's worship, thus is the remainder. "However, since the learned are guaranteed to

obtain mukti, how can they be tainted by non-performance of karma"?

- to answer this, it is said: 'yata', thus. "There is a reduction

on account of the sin of non-performance of Krishna's worship," thus is the remainder. As there occurs a reduction, therefore, even in the learned who do not suffer a loss of mukti, there is the taint of karma. As there is thus the taint in both (the ignorant and the learned), they both needs must worship Krishna, thus is the meaning.

However, the present interpretation brings in extra material from the bhAshhya, etc.; how is it known purely on the basis of the Upanishad itself, that the other interpretation is not acceptable? Our commentator answers this by going on to say:

asaN^gataM cha tasyeshAchchhAdyatvakathanam.h | na hi tatkarmAkaraNe hetuH | tathA sati aj~nasyApi tatprasaN^gena uttaramantravirodhAt.h | IshAvAsyatvaj~nAnopalaxaNapaxe.api asaN^gatireva | na hi jagadIshAvAsyamiti jAnatA karma na kAryamiti niyamo.asti | advaitaj~nAnamanenopalaxitamiti chenna | virodhAt.h | na hi AchchhAdya AchchhAdakayoH abhedo dR^ishhTapUrvaH | sarvamapi IshAvAsyamaN^gIkurvatA.avashyaM jagatIpadasya sarvopalaxaNatvamaN^gIkartavyam.h | tato varaM prakR^itivAchakatvagrahaNameva | sarvArthalAbhAt.h | na cha tatpaxasyopayogo.asti | bhuJNjIthA ityasya pAlanArthatAyAM AtmanepadavirodhaH | dhanamithyAtvaM cha pratyaxAdiviruddhamiti |

Your statement of the Lord's covering (the world) is also a non sequitur. Indeed, it (the world being covered by the Lord) is not a reason for not performing karma? If it were so, then even for an ignorant the same would hold, causing a conflict with the subsequent mantra (which, even according to you, advises him to perform duties).

Even if it be held that **knowledge of** the Lord's covering the world is intended, there is asangati ('AkAN^xAviraho asaN^gatiH' = lack of connection is asangati) only. Indeed, there is no rule, "If you know the world to be obscured by the Lord, then do not perform karma," thus?

But this is only a statement intended to show the realization of non-duality, thus say you? No, that is incorrect. Because there is never a case seen where there is non-duality between the covering agent or cause and that which is obscured thereby. If all is to be accepted as being covered by the Lord, then certainly the word 'jagatI' (in the first mantra) must be accepted as being an upalaxaNa (example) that means "all." Better than this, for sure, it is to accept it as indicating 'prakR^iti' (as read by Srimad Acharya). Because all ends can be obtained thereby. There is also no use for your theory.

By saying 'bhuJNjithA' means to provide for or to maintain, the 'Atmanepada' (Atmane AtmArthaphalabodhanAya padaM = a voice for oneself indicating a means to an end) is also violated. The illusoriness of wealth is also opposed to experience, thus.

Sri Jayatiirtha therefore points out that (i) there is no previously

proven connection between the world's being obscured by the Lord, and the non-performance of duties, which would allow for the one to be used as a reason to urge the latter; (ii) the other meaning given is also grammatically unsound.

Some additional points are made in the prakAshikA of Sri Vadiraja, which partly explains the commentary of Sri Jayatiirtha, but goes on to make several additions points, and finally states a scathing judgement on Sri Shankara's commentary on the IshAvAsya.

This is what Sri Vadiraja says:

‘na prAguttarANi karmANi pApAni bAdhanta’ ityasya nirantara bhagavatpUjAyA.api sakalapApaprAyashchittarUpatvAditi bhAvaH | ‘na hi jagadIshAvAsyamiti jAnatA’ ityatra rAtrau tamasA.ahni himAnyA cha jagata AchchhAdyatvaM jAnatA.api sandhyAvandanAdi-karmakaraNadarshanAditi bhAvaH |

By the statement ‘na prAguttarANi’, only the constant worship of the Lord is of the form of atonement for all sins, thus is the purport. By saying ‘na hi jagadIshAvAsyaM iti jAnatA’, the sense is that by knowing that the world is covered by darkness at night, or else by snow, etc., performance of such duties as sandhyAvandanaM is seen (hence there is no rule that knowing the world to be covered is justification for rejection of karma).

‘advaitaj~nAnamanenopalaxyata’ ityetadapi na prakR^itopayogi | advaitaj~nAnavatA mAyAvAdinA AchAryeNaiva japAdikarmaNAM kriyamANatvAt.h | aN^gIkR^itya dushhaNAntaramAha -- ‘ na hi’, iti |

By saying ‘advaitaj~nAnaM anena upalaxyate’, even by this, it is shown that the theory (that karma is to be rejected if the world is known to be covered by Ishvara) is not useful. For even the persons alleged to possess advaita-j~nAna, i.e., the mAyAvAdI AchAryA-s, themselves perform actions like japa, etc. If this is accepted, then an alternative flaw is shown -- ‘na hi’, thus (there is never a case seen where there is non-difference between the covering agent and the thing covered, as there must be between the world and Ishvara, its alleged material cause).

‘na cha tatpaxe.asyopayogo.asti’ ityasya IshAchchhAdyasvargAdyarthaM tairapi yaj~nAdeH kriyamANatvAditi bhAvaH | ‘bhujo.anavana’ ityavanArthe AtmanepadanishhedhAditi bhAvenAha -- ‘Atmanepada virodha’, iti |

By saying, ‘tat.h paxe asya upayogo asti’ (there is no use for your theory), the purport is that even by you, actions such as sacrifices for obtaining the Lord-covered heaven, etc., are seen. Because of the statement ‘bhujo.anavana’, the Atmanepada is forbidden, to show this, it is said -- ‘Atmanepada virodha’, thus.

kiM cha IshA IshitrA AchchhAdyaM jagaditi cha na mAyAvAdinA vaktuM shakyate | Ishvaro mAyayA avidyamAnameva jagaddarshayati, iti hi tanmatam.h | kathamanyathA dR^ishyatvena mithyAtvaM vadet.h ?

And then, too, it is not possible for the mAyAvAdins to state that the world is obscured by the Lord. For it is indeed their theory that the Ishvara causes the inexistent world **to appear** through His power of mAya. How else would the claim that the world is illusory for being seen, be justified?

api cha raxasA rasAtale AchchhAditajagataH varAharUpiNA bhagavatA ***AchchhAdakajalAduddhR^itya prakAshitatvAchcha kathaM*** IshAchchhAdyatvam.h ? ‘tameva bhAntamanubhAti sarvam.h’ (shve. u. ***VI-14; mu. u. II-2-11; ka. u. I-3-22) iti cha tatpaxaH |***

And then, too, when the world itself was obscured by the demon, the Lord in the form of Varaha lifted it out of the water and

brought it to light—thus, how is the world obscured by Ishvara?
"When He is known, all is known," thus also is your theory.

ato.api neshAchchhAdyatvam.h | kiM cha—

'yadAdityagataM tejo jagadbhAsayate.akhilam.h |
yachchandramasi yachchAgnau tattejo viddhi mAmakam.h ||'

(bha. gI. XV-12) iti gItAyAM jagadIshena kR^ishhNenaivoktatvAt.h kathamIshAchchhAdyaM jagat.h ?

Thus, too, the world is not obscured by Ishvara. Why, when

"What luminosity there is in the sun, which illuminates the whole world; what is there in the moon, and also in fire, know that to be on account of Me,"

thus has been stated in the 'Gita by the Lord of the world, Krishna,

Himself, how is the world obscured by Ishvara?

ato 'yatkiJNchid.h' etat.h | pratyuta 'tadavyaktamAha hi' 'yattadadreshyamagrAhyam.h' (bR^i. u.) 'adR^ishyatvAdiguNako dharmokteH' (bra. sU.) 'mAyAyavanikAchchhannamahimne brahmaNe namaH' ityAdishrutismR^itibhyaH svamate brahmaiva AchchhAdyam.h | brahmaNo jagadAropAdishhThAnatvAN^gIkArAchcha svaprakriyayA brahmaiva AchchhAdyam.h | evaM cha IshAchchhAdyatvena tyAge brahmaNa eva tyAgaprasaN^gaH ! na tu karmaNaH | ato.api svAj~nAna-vijR^imbhitamevedaM vyAkhyAnam.h |

Thus, ‘yatkiJNchid.h’ is thus: on the other hand, “He is stated to be invisible,” “He who is unseen, and beyond the grasp of the senses,” “by such qualities as invisibility, His properties are stated,” “I salute Brahman, the great Lord, who is obscured through mAyA,” from such statements of Shruti and Smrti, in our doctrine, Brahman Himself is obscured. Also, since in your theory Brahman is also the substratum which is transformed into the world, He alone is obscured/hidden even by your own line of reasoning. If you would insist that the world is to be rejected on account of being obscured, then you would also, in like measure, have to reject Brahman as well for the same reason! Not karma (as you have claimed). Therefore, your explanation is made through ignorance, only.

api cha jagadIshAchchhAdyaM chet.h karma kutaH tyAjyam.h ? karmaNo.api jagadantaHpAtitvAditi chet.h tarhi moxasAdhana manovR^ittirUpAparoxaj~nAnasyApi tata evopexyatvaM syAt.h ? kiM cha indravAyvAdirUpatayA mahAj~nAnibhiH pANDavaireva mahatA prayatnena rAjasUyAshvamedhAdikarmaNAM kR^itatvAt.h kathaM j~nAninA karma tyAjyam.h ? kiM cha mahAj~nAninaM pArthaM prati ‘karmaNyevAdhikAraste mA phaleshhu kadAchana’ iti nivR^ittirUpakarmaNi eva j~nAnina evAdhikArasyoktatvAt.h | anenaiva kvachit.h—

‘niyatasya tu sa.nnyAsaH karmaNo nopapadyate |
mohAt.h tasya parityAgaH tAmasaH parikIrtitaH ||’

(bha. gI. XVIII-7)

iti sandhyAvandanAdikarmaNAmatyAjyatvasyaiva bhagavatA kathanAchcha |

Even if you say that the world is obscured by the Lord (in spite of all the problems with that theory), how is karma to be rejected on that basis? If you say that is because karma-s are internal to the world, then one can likewise recommend the rejection of the aparoxa-j~nAna of the mind which is a means for mukti. Also, when the Pandava-s, who were incarnations of Indra, Vayu, etc., and were of great learning, did perform actions of great effort such as the Rajasuya, Ashvamedha, etc., how can it be held that the learned are to give up action? Why, too, was the instruction to the very learned Partha: "karma alone is your right, never the results thereof," stating that actions as renunciation alone are the right of the learned? To such end, only,

"The giving up of the enjoined duties is not justified;
their rejection on account of delusion is declared to be demonic,"

- thus the unfitness for rejection of karma-s such as sandhyAvandana, etc., has been stated by the Lord.

pAlayethA ityatra pAlanAvishhayatayA karma cha na pareNa vaktuM shakyam.h | IshAchchhAdyasakalajagatAmupexaNaM sati Atmaiva hi urvaritaH eva cha svAtmAnameva tvaM pAlayethA ityuktaM syAt.h ? tachcha kartR^ikarmabhAvavirodhAnnityasyAtmanaH pAlyatvAyogAchcha ayuktam.h |

By saying 'pAlayethA' (which is the other's interpretation for 'bhuJNjIthA), because the subject is the upkeep or maintenance, such karma cannot be stated to another. If the entire universe is to be rejected on account of its being obscured by the Ishvara,

then oneself is still to be supported, and one must still be maintained (in the world that is fit for rejection), is this fair to state? Then, too, because of its opposition to the sense of the doer and the deed (the Lord being the doer and the world the deed), and the eternal self being inappropriate for rearing, such is incorrect.

ato markaTaH svakaragataratnamAlAyA iva upanishhadAmapakartaiva paro na vyAkarteti yuktamutpashyAmaH ||

Therefore, just as with a monkey's [rude and unappreciative] play with a diamond-studded necklace that falls into its hands, so also is the other's (Shankara's) mis-handling of this Upanishad, and he is not fit to be regarded as a commentator at all, thus it is to be said.

This judgement doubtless holds for all neo-Vedantic and other such latter-day expositors of the IshAvAsya as well.

Finally, here is the khaNDArtha of Sri Raghavendra Tiirtha on the verse (stated again for ease of reference), which summarizes the purport stated by Sri Jayatiirtha:

kurvanneveha karmANi jijIvishhechchhataM samAH |
evaM tvayi nAnyatheto.asti na karma lipyate nare ||

khaNDArtha—

tR^ishhNAvichchhedavat.h svochitakarmAnushhThAnamapi j~nAnArthinAM AvashyakamityAha -- 'kurvanneva' iti | shataM samAH shataM

varshhANi | 'kAlAdhvanoratyantasaMyoge' (ashhTAdhyAyI II-3-5, si. kau. 559) iti dvitIyA | iha mAnushhAdijanmani yAvajjijIvishhet.h jIvitumichchhet.h tAvat.h karmANi kurvanneva AmaraNaM bhagavat.h pUjAtmakAni asaN^kalpitaphalAni svochitAni karmANi sarvathA kuryAd.h iti yAvat.h | kutaH ? evaM karmANi kurvati nare manushhyamAtre.api tvayi karma pApaM na lipyate | svochitAni asaN^kalpitaphalena karmaNA bhagavatpUjAM kurvantaM alpAdhikAriNamapi na prAguttarANi pApAni bAdhante | tatashcha j~nAnAdhikArI sa bhavatIti yAvat.h | itaH karmakAraNAt.h anyathA akaraNe karma pApaM na lipyata iti nAsti | bhagavatpUjAmakurvantaM pApAni bAdhanta eva | tatashchAsau j~nAne na adhikriyate | atashcha karmANi kuryAditi | purushhArthanaye 'niyamAchcha' (III-4-7) iti sUtrabhAshhyAdau 'nare j~nAninyapi tvayi karma na lipyata iti nAsti' iti aparoxaj~nAnino api karmAkaraNe muktau AnandahrAsarUpa pApa karmalepo astyeveti j~nAniparatayA mantro vyAkhyataH ||

Just as with (actions towards) quenching of thirst, the actions required of oneself are required of one desirous of knowledge; to state this, it is said -- 'kurvanneva', thus. 'shataM samAH' means, [for] a hundred years. By the 'kAlAdhvanoratyantasaMyoge', the dvitIyA is used. This human life, as long as you wish to live, certainly do perform karma-s, until the time of death— [these being] actions required of one, as worship of the Lord, without material ends, are to be always performed. Why? Because even to a mere human who performs such action, karma, or sin, does not attach. The karma-s one is supposed to do, by doing without material desires, even one of low ability is not bound by sins past or future. Such a one even becomes qualified to obtain knowledge. It is also not to be said that by non-performance of karma no sin attaches [to the learned]. By not performing the worship of the Lord, sins certainly do bind [even such a one]. Because the knowledge does not increase. Therefore, perform required karma-s, thus.

In the matter of purushhArtha-s, under the sUtra ‘niyamAchcha’, the bhAshhyakAra has thus stated: “even a learned human cannot claim that no karma attaches, thus,” showing that even in case of those having aparoxa-j~nAna, by not performing karma, reduction of joy in mukti, thuslike karma attaches—therefore, this mantra is intended for the learned also.

As may be seen, Sri Raghavendra also points out that this mantra is the vishhaya-vAkhya for the sUtra he quotes in this connection.

At the conclusion of the previous verse, one may say that perhaps what is taught in the Vedas is ultimately a lesser art that could be achieved by some other realization, which means that the Vedic enjoinment to action quoted previously is itself ultimately circumscribed in this manner. To answer this, it is said:

##

AchArashchaiva sAdhUnAmAtmano ruchireva cha |
vedapraNihito dharmo hyadharmastadviparyayaH || 213 ||

##

The conduct of the sages only, and the satisfaction caused to oneself; the rules laid out in the Vedas are dharma, and adharma is all

that is opposed to them.

When one lives a life according to the rules for worship of Krishna, the satisfaction caused to oneself thereby is itself ample proof of its correctness; because there may be doubt about correctness and someone with an unclean mind cannot use this method to determine right and wrong, the conduct of sages is the method that guides. Since they worshipped Krishna, so must we.

The second hemistich is quoted from the Bhagavata (VI-1-40); it and the first hemistich (from an unknown source) are also quoted in the same order in the gItAbhAshhya (II-45), where Sri Jayatiirtha explains them as:

AchAro dharmabuddhyAnushhThAnam.h | Atmano manaso ruchirvikalpavishhaye | praNihito vihitaH | tadviparyayaH pratishhiddhaH |

'AchAra' means the observance of the attitude of dharma. 'Atmano' refers to the taste of the mind for the present subject (Krishna). 'praNihito' means that expounded by [the Vedas]. 'tadviparyayaH' means that forbidden [by the Vedas].

It may not be said that the Vedic injunctions are without value or that they are ultimately limited, because only that which is declared by the Vedas is dharma, and anything not so declared is adharma. There exists no other reasonable standard of conduct than the one expounded by the Vedas since dharma and adharma cannot be determined by authored statements.

At that, one may yet say that since it is so commonly expounded that

giving up of duties alone befits the seeker (perhaps after realization, but possibly even before), how can it be said that only their performance is correct? By statements like 'sarvadharmAn.h parityajya', should one not give up all these superfluous actions? To answer this, it is said:

##

nishhkAmaM j~nAnapUrvaM tu nivR^ittimiti chochyate |
nivR^ittaM sevamAnastu brahmAbhyeti sanAtanam.h || 214 ||

##

Action performed without desire, with proper knowledge, is called as renunciation; renunciation carried out as service only, leads one to obtain Brahman.

Therefore, there is no other valid form of renunciation except action without desire performed as service with the right knowledge; other notions of renunciation are misleading and are to be discarded outright.

[N.B. This verse is quoted in the gItAbhAshhya under III-4 with an obvious misinterpretation of it intended as the statement of pUrvapaxa in that instance.]

After all this, one may wonder: what purpose has been served now that one has patiently waded through all this material? To answer this, it is said:

##

etatpuNyaM paraM guhyaM pavitraM pApanAshanam.h |
AyushhyaM cha yashasvaM cha kalidussvapnanAshanam.h || 215 ||

##

This is meritorious, a foremost secret, clean, and removes sin;
it bestows long life, fame, and annihilates the menace of Kali and bad dreams.

For all these reasons, the effort has not been wasted.

At that, one may yet wonder if the claim can possibly be true; for one carries such a large burden of past misdeeds, &c., that one cannot easily believe that one would ever escape their pestilence, and also since one is certain to have incompletely understood all that has been stated. To answer this, the next verse says:

##

kalau pApaM kiyanmAtraM bhaktyA.ante yAti saN^xayam.h |
smR^ite manasi govinde dahyate tUlarAshivat.h || 216 ||

##

In whatever amount a devotee's sins may exist [even] in the Kali age;
by remembering Govinda in one's mind, they are annihilated as a heap of cotton.

Compare with verse 44, et seq.

Even then, one may say, considering that bad things happen to people all around on a daily basis, and one sees so much suffering and injustice, it is difficult to accept that the results promised will actually be seen in oneself. To answer this, it is said:

##

kalau keshavabhaktAnAM na bhayaM vidyate kvachit.h |
smR^ite saN^kIrtite dhyAte saN^xayaM yAti pAtakam.h || 217 ||

##

[Even] in the age of Kali, there is no fear whatsoever for devotees of Keshava; by remembering, worshipping, and meditating upon [whom],
all of one's sins are destroyed without residue.

As all of one's sins are liable to be destroyed by correct understanding and worship of Krishna, there need be no fear of harm done on their account even in spite of such worship. This is true no matter what one's circumstances.

After stating the usefulness of the subject under discussion, our author proceeds to state the purpose and method of study of the present text itself:

##

adhyetavyamidaM shAstraM shrotavyamanasUyayA |
bhaktebhyashcha pradAdatvyaM dhArmikebhyaH punaH punaH || 218 ||

##

This shAstra is to be studied, and to be listened to without ill-will; it should be propagated to [Krishna's] devotees, and to the righteous, time and again.

Therefore, it is not merely enough that one has read it once and appears to have a superficial understanding of some points—one is to study it thoroughly and grasp it as well as one can. One further is not to keep this knowledge to oneself, but must propagate it to qualified others.

At this, one may ask: how then is this text to be differentiated from those of a zillion other doctrines which also make similar claims? To answer this, it is said:

##

adhIyanA idaM satyaM vishhNormAhAtmyamuttamam.h |
sarvapApavinirmuktAH prApnuvanti paraM padam.h || 219 ||

##

Having studied this true representation of Vishnu's highest greatness; [seekers are] freed from all sins, and attain the Highest Abode.

As it is the case that only the exact understanding of Krishna leads to mukti and nothing else does, the present text is distinguished from myriad others in being able to free seekers from sins arising out of incorrect understanding.

At that, one may say that such claims are easy to make and mean nothing for being unverifiable. To answer this, it is said:

##

shrutvA dharmaM vijAnAti shrutvA tyajati durmatim.h |
shrutvA j~nAnamavApnoti shrutvA moxaM cha gachchhati || 220 ||

##

Upon listening to this [in the prescribed fashion] dharma is known; upon listening to this, the evil mentality is given up; upon

listening to this, knowledge [of Krishna] is obtained, and upon listening to this, one goes to moksha as well.

As these results may progressively be observed in oneself upon a careful study of this text, it cannot be claimed that its claim of usefulness is unverifiable—

##

tasmAdidaM samAshravyaM shrotavyaM cha sadaiva hi |
kutarkadAvadagdhebyo na dAtavyaM kathaJNchana || 221 ||

##

Therefore, this [text] is to be studied, and listened to, constantly; it is never, under any circumstance, to be given to those who burn in the fire of sophistic inferences.

Since this text has great use, it is to be continually studied and better understood; however, there are those who would rather amuse themselves with their own or others' false deductions and illustrations claiming to prove things contrary to scriptural statements about the reality of Krishna's greatness, and with them one must not bother. Only those who have genuine interest in and affection for Krishna qualify for the study of this material.

At that, one may get the doubt: why is this text given its name? The author gives his answer as follows:

##

saMsAravishhapAnena ye mR^itAH prANino bhuvi |
amR^itAya kR^itasteshhAM kR^ishhNAmR^itamahArNavaH || 222 ||

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On account of having consumed the poison of the world, those who have become as dead creatures; to give them ‘amR^ita’ (the nectar of immortality) is this work composed, which is hence the ‘kR^ishhNAmR^ita-mahArNava’ (the ocean of the amR^ita of Krishna).

The reckless indulgence in worldly pursuits and sensory satisfaction, and the total lack of ultimate gratification therefrom, have left many feeling spiritually like beasts felled with poison; for their cure and lasting benefit, the author has composed, out of his boundless kindness, the present text, which recharges one’s spirituality and also makes it immune to any further hurt from the poison of the world.

At that, one may say that surely the claim is too bold and unreasonable; it cannot be accepted that this one text has such unheard-of qualities that it redeems those made as dead in the world, etc. While one can be generous and grant that one does find a few mildly interesting points in it, one cannot accept that it is really as an ocean of amR^ita, etc. To answer this, it is said:

##

yasya trINyuditAni vedavachane rUpANi divyAnyalaM
baT.h taddarshatamitthameva nihitaM devasya bhargo mahat.h |
vAyo rAmavachonayaM prathamakaM pR^ixo dvitIyaM vapuH
madhvo yattu tR^itIyametadamunA granthaH kR^itaH keshave || 223 ||

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He whose three forms are described in Vedic statements as completely divine, as being of the nature of great strength, knowledge, and of this character only on account of the Will of the Supreme Being who also pervades them; as supporting the universe and being able to move through it at will, and fit for worship—by that Vayu in his first form the message of Rama was carried, and his second form was that of the destroyer of the [Kaurava] army; and in the third, which has indeed been described as 'madhva' (giver of joy), this text has been composed in order to expound Keshava.

The 'yasya trINyuditAni' verse is found also in the anu-vyAkhyAna and in the vishhNu-tattva-vinirNaya, with a variant occurring in the brahma-sUtra-bhAshhya and other texts. In the commentary upon the vishhNu-tattva-vinirNaya, Sri Jayatiirtha says:

evaM samApitaprakaraNo bhagavAnAchAryo bhaktAnAM svasvarUpaM
khyapayan.h svakR^itagranthaM keshave samarpayannAha |
granthAntarAdasya shlokasyArtho.avagantavyaH |

Having finished the text, the great Acharya informs the devotees of his identity, and offers his composition to Keshava. By consulting other texts, the meaning of this shloka is to be understood in detail.

This is in turn explained by Sri Raghavendra Tiirtha as follows:

granthAntarAditi—

bhAshhyaTIkArUpAditi vA hanushabdo j~navAchItyAdigranthAntarAdi vA.arthaH |

In the texts which are commentaries on the bhAshhya-s, or else in the texts 'hanushabdo j~nAnavAchI' (quoted to explain the baLitthA sUkta), etc., thus is the meaning.

That is to say, the meaning of the 'yasya trIyuditAni' verse may be understood by studying the nyAya-sudhA commentary where it is explained in detail, and by studying the Upanishad commentaries, etc., where the baLitthA sUkta (referred to by it) is explained in detail.

Sri Raghavendra's own explanation of the verse, which closely follows the nyAya-sudhA presentation, is as follows:

yasya vAyordevasya baLitthetyAdivedavachane krIDAdiguNayuktAni trINi rUpANyuditAni tasya yattR^itIyaM rUpaM amunA.ayaM granthaH keshavavishhaye kR^ita ityanvayaH |

That Vayu-deva, who has been described in Vedic statements like the baLitthA to be of the nature of sporting, and to have have three forms, of which the present is the third—this is his composition expounding upon the subject of Keshava, thus is the meaning.

‘alam.h’ iti—kIdR^ishaM chAsya mUlarUpaM kAni cha trINi kIdR^ishAnIti tatrAha |

‘alam.h’ (sufficient/complete), thus—“What is his original form like, and how are the three incarnations?” to answer this it is stated.

tadasya vAyurmUlarUpaM baT.h balAtmakaM darshataM j~nAnarUpaM bhargo jagadbharaNagamanaguNaM mahat.h mahanIyam.h |

The purports are that Vayu’s original form is stated to be of the nature of strength, vide ‘baT.h’; of the nature of knowledge, vide ‘darshataM’; as supporting and moving through the universe, vide ‘bhargaH’, and worshippable, vide ‘mahat.h’.

‘tad.h’—itthambhUtaM eva rUpatrayAvatArAya bhagavatA nihitaM sthApitaM avatIrNaM cha |

By ‘tad.h’, it is indicated that it is certain that this entity’s three forms are verily of this nature, and are resided in, established, and caused to incarnate, by the Lord.

What three forms?

1> Hanuman:

tatra prathamaM hanumadAkhyaM vapuH rAmasya vachAMsi sItAM prati nItavat.h |

His first form known as Hanuman carried Rama's message to Sita exactly.

rAmavishhayavachAMsi mUlarAmAyaNAdirUpANi shishhyeshhu nItavadvA |

Or that he brought the information on the subject of Rama, in the form of the 'mUla-rAmAyaNa' and others, to His devotees, without error.

rAmavachasi nayo nyAya Aj~nArUpastadyuktaM vA |

Or that he [always] took the word of Rama to be a code, rule, and command (thus establishing the code of conduct for a devotee).

2> Bhimasena:

dvitIyaM vapurbhImanAmakaM kurupR^itanAxayakaram.h |

The second form, named Bhima, was the destroyer of the Kuru army.

3> Madhva:

tR^itIyaM vapuH AnandarUpasya hareH pratipAdakashAstranirmAtR^i madhvAbhidham.h—iti |

The third form, which is the creator of a shaastra about Hari who is of the form of Joy, is known as 'madhva'—thus.

(madhu+va = Ananda+tIrtha = giver of joy, for being the proponent of a shaastra that brings the joy that does not cease, and for being the proponent of a Deity whose nature is unceasing and independent joy).

It is said in the baLitthA sUkta that Madhva alone establishes the Resident of one's heart by rigorous reasoning: 'yad.h IM anupradivo madhva Adhave guhAsantaM mAtarishvA mathAyati', therefore, the present text will, on careful perusal and understanding, be seen to have close-knit thread of reasoning and not stray, unconnected points of interest. The present text has been composed by an author who has been noted even in the Vedas as being the form of a deity whose very nature is undiminished knowledge and joy, and who has no motive for action except the service of Krishna. The present text has therefore been composed by an author of the highest caliber, and has been composed just to expound Krishna and with no other purpose. Thus, it cannot be thought that the text comes from a deficient author, or else from one who means to defraud, or that its meaning is something other than Krishna, and as such, no reasonable doubt may exist about its worth.

Having completed the text, the author now proceeds to conclude it with a prayer that those who study it may receive Krishna's unique mercy:

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shrImadAnandatIrthAryasahasrakiraNotthitA |
gotatiH satataM sevyA gIrvANaiH siddhidA bhavet.h || 224 ||

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This text, which is as hundreds of rays of light coming from Srimad Ananda Tiirtha which are constantly to be worshipped even by the deities, may it become the fulfiller of all [devotees’] desires.

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iti shrImadAnandatIrthabhagavatpAdAchAryavirachitam.h
shrIkR^ishhNAmR^itamahArNavanAma granthottamaM saMpUrNam.h

|| bhAratIramaNamukhyaprANAntargata shrIkR^ishhNArpaNamastu ||

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brahmAntA guravaH sAxAt.h IshhTaM daivaM shriyaH patiH |
AchAryAH shrImadAchAryAH santu me janma janmani ||

This series, which was begun on Madhva Jayanti, is concluded today on Madhva Navami. Any corrections or improvements gratefully accepted. This

will also be my last posting for some time (at least until Sri Vyasaraya’s day in March, but possibly later).

Regards,

Shrisha Rao

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